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THE REAL 100 GREATEST ALBUMS OF THE 60s

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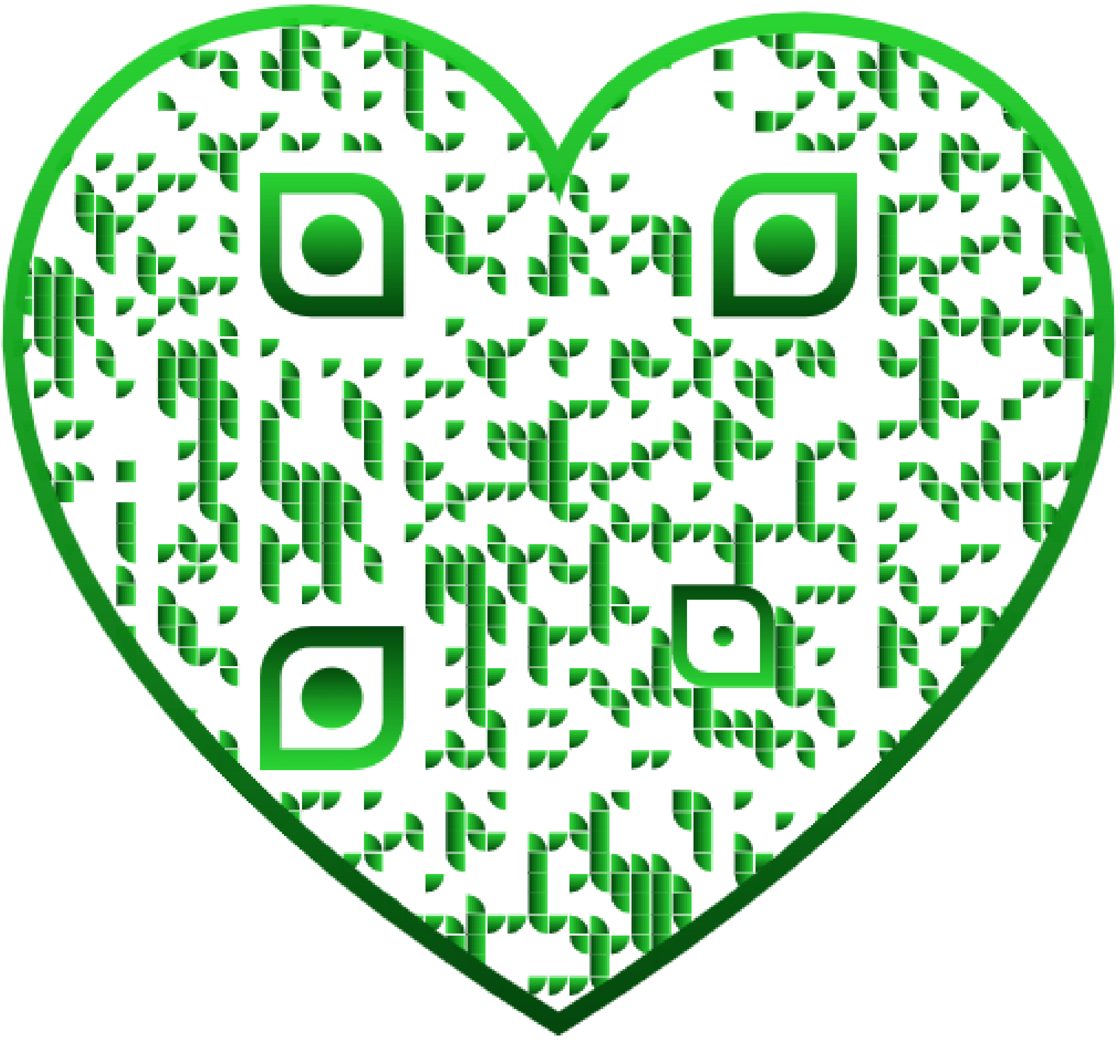
The records the *really* rocked the 60s

* No Sgt Pepper, Are You Experienced, Pet Sounds...

FUTURE

ISSUE 259



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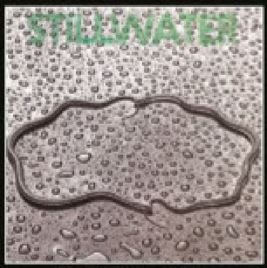
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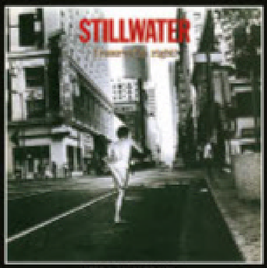
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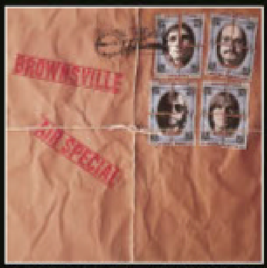
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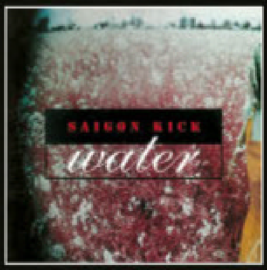
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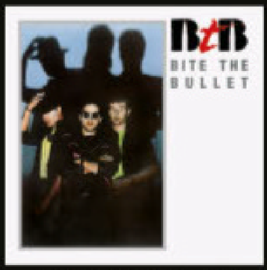
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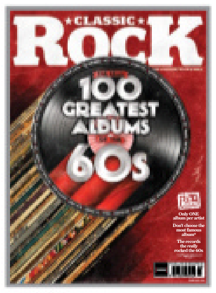
The lore of rock'n'roll dictates that some (most?) rules are meant to be broken. And this month we're breaking the law of chronology to present to you the fourth in our series (following the 70s, 80s and 90s) of Real Greatest Albums Of The Decade special issues by going back to the beginning and revisiting the 60s, the decade when rock'n'roll really came into its own.

And this is where, as ever, we ran into trouble. Think about it. This was the decade that gave us near as dammit the entire Beatles canon (apart from *Let It Be*), the Rolling Stones' *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, *Beggars Banquet* and more. The decade in which The Who announced their bombastic arrival, Led Zeppelin managed to unleash their first two albums within the space of the final year of it, Pink Floyd made their debuts with and without Syd Barrett, Jimi Hendrix and his Experience blew everyone's minds… The list just goes on and on and on… See the problem?

So this month we took a deep dive and chose those 60s albums that every self-respecting rock fan needs to own, but aren't necessarily the usual suspects. But to do that there were some rules that we *didn't* break – see p22…

Siân Llewellyn, Editor



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This month's contributors

JO KENDALL
Lover of moustaches, pipes and difficult time signatures, *Prog* magazine's albums editor and *Classic Rock* columnist Jo revisits her time as promoter for fêted 60s-influenced club night Blow Up with some entries in our cover feature, delighting especially in old favourite *Book Of Taliesyn* by her beloved mod-proggers Deep Purple.

HUGH FIELDER
Hugh Fielder (seen here in 1967 after failing the audition for Dave Dee Dozy Beaky Mick & Tich) has more than three quarters of our Real Classic Albums Of The 60s list either on CD or the original battered vinyl – some he's even got on both. He still can't hear The Kinks on *Live At Kelvin Hall* on either format.

KRIS NEEDS
Now facing his seventh year as a *Classic Rock* contributor, Kris (pictured here singing in 1984 with short-lived Batcave shambles The Intestines) broke away from writing about the Stones, Hendrix and Mott The Hoople for his upcoming 1969 memoir *Just A Shot Away* to expound about the latter and more overlooked 60s rock titans.

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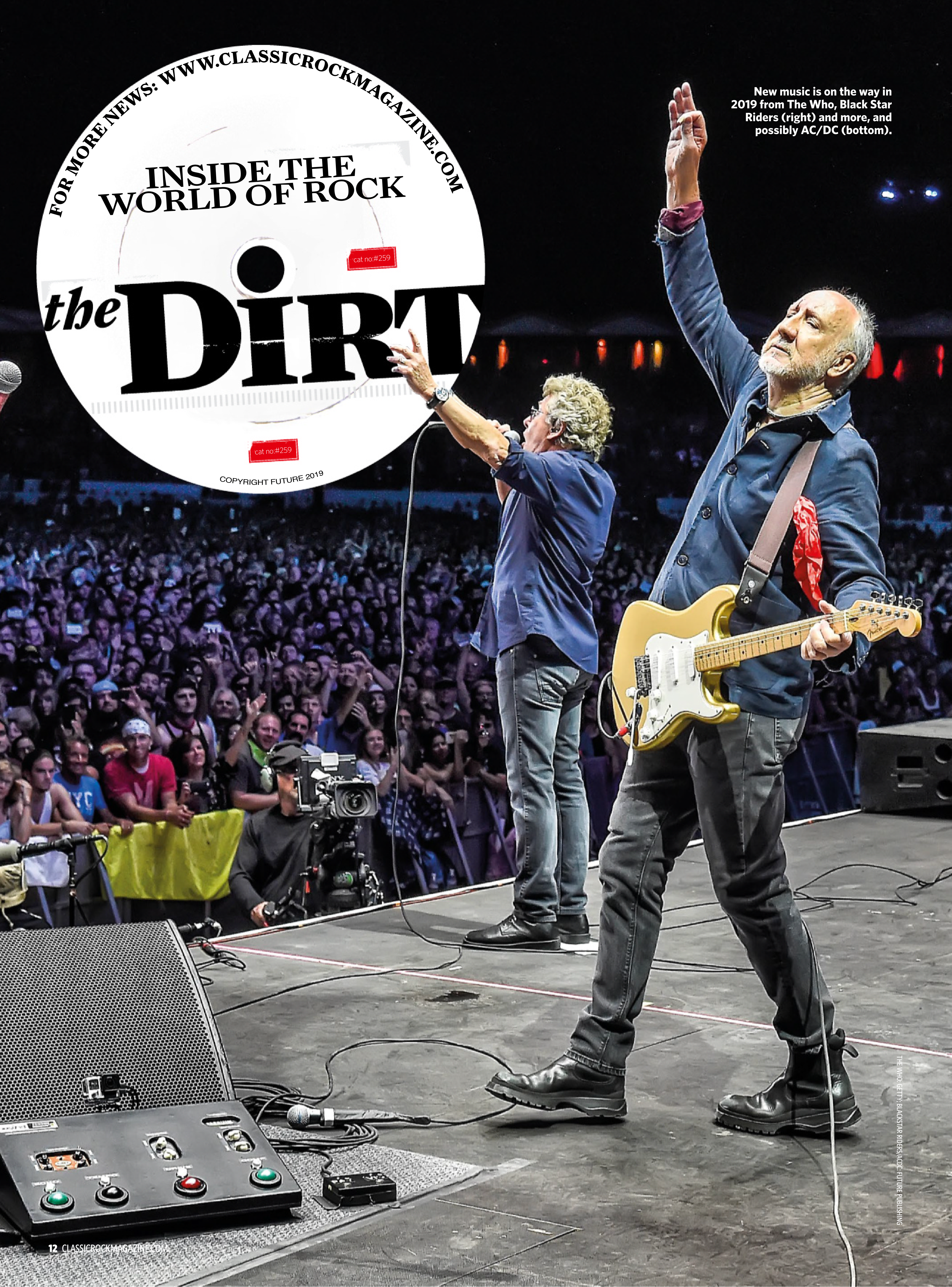

New music is on the way in 2019 from The Who, Black Star Riders (right) and more, and possibly AC/DC (bottom).

THE WHO: GETTY; BLACKSTAR RIDERS/ACDC: FUTURE PUBLISHING

Who's Next (And Maybe Final)

As Townshend and Daltrey break silence on new Who album, we preview 10 more new releases we're looking forward to this year.

The Who are in the studio working on their twelfth studio album, the follow-up to *Endless Wire* released in 2006, which included a 10-part mini-opera. Of the new record's direction, guitarist and writer Pete Townshend says to expect "dark ballads, heavy rock stuff, experimental electronica, sampled stuff and Who-ish tunes that begin with a guitar that goes 'yanga-dang'".

Townshend also admitted to *Rolling Stone* that Roger Daltrey took some time to come around to the new material, the frontman having voiced reservations over the guitarist's early demo versions.

"I had to bully him to respond, and then it wasn't the response I wanted," Townshend confirms. "He just blathered for a while, and in the end I really stamped my foot and said: 'Roger, I don't care if you really like this stuff. You have to sing it. You'll like it in ten years' time.'"

Although Townshend, 73, is set to dominate the credits as usual, Daltrey hopes to contribute some material he's written. "This has nothing to do with wanting a hit album [or] the fact The Who need a new album," he says. "It's purely personal. It's about my pride, my sense of self-worth and self-dignity as a writer."

The album is expected later this year, more details when we get them.

> **"Expect Who-ish tunes that begin with a guitar that goes 'yanga-dang'."**
>
> **Pete Townshend**

In the meantime, The Who will be touring North America from May to October, sharing the stage with orchestras at prestigious venues including New York's Madison Square Garden and the Hollywood Bowl. Daltrey, 74, admits these concerts could mark the end of his career. "This will possibly be my last tour," he told the *Mirror*. "I have to be realistic that this is the age I am, and voices start to go after a while. I don't want to be not as good as I was two years ago."

The release schedule for 2019 also includes brand new records from a variety of familiar names and fresh-faced newcomers. Here are 10 of them that really fascinate us.

Old faithfuls **AC/DC** top the list, of course. What's not to love about the *Back In Black* line-up (if reports are true) recording material worked up alongside the late, great Malcolm Young (whose place is to be taken by the Youngs' nephew Stevie)? Bring it on, we say.

Richie Sambora, who was inducted to the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame a year ago with his former band Bon Jovi and is currently working with his girlfriend Orianthi in the project RSO, is set to resume his solo career. Internet reports claim that the guitarist's follow-up to his 2012 album *Aftermath Of The Lowdown* will see him retrace his rock roots.

In the 13 years since **Tool** last released a record, will we finally hear new music from the band in 2019? They have cried wolf more than once before, of course, but according to his tweets, frontman Maynard James Keenan believes that new music from them is more probable than possible. Intriguingly, each of the album's songs is said to be more than 10 minutes long.

Back in September, **Rammstein** almost broke the internet when, without warning, their website carried the announcement: "[We are] almost done! Orchestra and choir recordings in Minsk for album No. 7." And no wonder, as almost a decade has flown by since the Berliners gave us *Liebe Ist Für Alle Da*. The title and release date for the new record are yet to be announced, but we're hearing spring. Rammstein-meets-orchestral? It's bound to be bonkers.

Some might say that **Pearl Jam** have been dragging their heels since revealing a single, *Can't Deny Me*, 10 months ago, but sources insist that having wrapped up touring commitments an as-yet untitled eleventh studio album is ready at last.

Having replaced co-founding guitarist Damon Johnson with Christian Martucci from Stone Sour, **Black Star Riders** are itching to unveil their fourth album – especially as it was completed months ago. Martucci joined in time to take part in the sessions, this time with Jay Ruston producing instead of Nick Raskulinecz. For a variety of reasons the sound is likely to be different, but as guitarist Scott Gorham deadpans: "Not a lot."

Southern rockers **The Cadillac Three** have also been ahead of the game. Their fourth album was completed before the end of last year and will be getting a release some time in the coming months. "[We want to] start playing some new music as soon as possible," frontman Jaren Johnston tells *Classic Rock*.

Look out also for the return of former **Purson** frontwoman Rosalie Cunningham, who has spent many months piecing together a brand new solo project. The psychedelia-tinged music she has recorded, which will drag you kicking and screaming right back to 1971, are due to be shared via Pledge pretty soon.

Another fairly new name, California's **Joyous Wolf** are currently finishing their album with Grammy-nominated producer Howard Benson for release through Roadrunner Records. With influences ranging from heavy metal to Delta blues, the four-piece tore it up on a massive US tour with Buckcherry and have carved themselves quite a reputation among those in the know.

And last but most definitely not least, Mississippi band **Bishop Gunn** released a rather excellent debut album called *Natchez* (it's the name of their home town) last year, but the quartet are still a new name on this side in the UK. You'll be able to catch them live soon, when they support Slash on his next European tour. Remember where you heard their name first. **DL**

This month The Dirt was compiled by Emma Johnston, Hannah May Kilroy, Dave Ling

RIP

Thank you and good night.

Eric Haydock

February 3, 1943 – January 5, 2019

Bobby Elliott, drummer of The Hollies, has paid tribute to the Mancunian group's co-founding bassist, who died peacefully at his home, aged 75. Although Eric Haydock ended a four-year stay in 1966 following a dispute over management fees, Elliott rated his former rhythm section partner – one of the first Brits to use a six-string instrument – as being "among the finest bass players on the planet".

Dean Ford

September 5, 1946 – December 31, 2018

Born Thomas McAleese, Ford was the frontman of the Scottish guitar-pop group Marmalade from 1966 to 1974, co-writing their biggest hit, *Reflections Of My Life*. Post-Marmalade he issued a self-titled solo album produced by Alan Parsons. A follow-up, *Feel My Heartbeat*, emerged in 2017. Ford was 72 years old when he succumbed to complications relating to Parkinson's disease.

Daryl Dragon

August 27, 1942 – January 2, 2019

Better known as the Captain from The Captain And Tennille, Daryl Dragon, previously a keyboardist for the Beach Boys, co-founded the soft-rock duo with his then-wife Toni Tennille in 1974. Their hits included *Love Will Keep Us Together*, *Do That To Me One More Time* and *Muskrat Love*. Despite divorcing, Tennille was at his side when Dragon died from complications of renal failure, aged 76.

Pegi Young

December 1, 1952 – January 1, 2019

Neil Young has led tributes to his former wife of 36 years, the activist and musician Pegi, who had fought cancer for 12 months. Together they founded the Bridge School for youngsters with physical and speech impairments. "You will live on inside of [our children] and the many you have touched," he wrote of the 66-year-old who carved a solo career and led her band, The Survivors.

Steve Ripley

January 1, 1950 – January 3, 2019

The lead singer, guitarist and producer of the Grammy-nominated country-rock band the Tractors, best known for the 1994 single *Baby Likes To Rock It*, has lost a lengthy battle with cancer, two days after his 69th birthday. Also the owner of a guitar manufacturing company, Ripley made instruments for Steve Lukather, Edward Van Halen, JJ Cale, Ry Cooder and more.

NEWS

Woodstock festival co-founder Michael Lang says the festival will return in August to mark its 50th anniversary. Forty acts are lined up for the event at the Watkins Glen International Raceway in New York, including some who appeared at the original Woodstock in 1969, which drew more than 400,000 people. Don't expect The Who to be among them, though. "You can't redo Woodstock, because the stars of Woodstock were the audience," says Roger Daltrey.

Gig For Gary, a tribute concert in honour of the late **Gary Moore**, takes place at Belfast's Empire Music Hall on April 12, with proceeds going towards a memorial statue of the much-loved guitarist/vocalist who passed away in 2011. The bill includes the Eric Bell Trio, Gerry Quigley & The Durty Blues Band, Patricia Moore Band and Sam Davidson's Taste.

Get set to see Metallica frontman **James Hetfield** (pictured) make his acting debut, playing the part of a police officer in a movie about serial killer Ted Bundy. *Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil And Vile* is directed by Joe Berlinger, the man behind Metallica's own *Some Kind Of Monster*.

Geddy Lee reveals that Neil Peart has not only retired from Rush, but also that he no longer plays the drums. "Neil is living his life, which is fine," says the bassist/vocalist. "Alex [Lifeson, guitarist] and I are cool with it."

Ray Sawyer

February 1, 1937 – December 31, 2018

The charismatic backing vocalist and percussionist with Dr Hook & The Medicine Show died peacefully in his sleep on New Year's Eve, aged 81. Rarely seen without his trademark cowboy hat, Sawyer also sported a patch after losing an eye in a near-fatal car accident. Though he was not responsible for fronting the countrified soft rockers – a role that fell to band-mate Dennis Locorriere – his strong visual appearance made him a focal point. However, Sawyer *was* responsible for singing one of the group's most famous tunes, 1972's *Cover Of The Rolling Stone*.

Born in Chickasaw, Alabama, Sawyer co-founded Dr Hook & The Medicine Show in 1968, working up a riotous, zany act in the rowdy bars of Locorriere's home turf in Union City, New Jersey. There followed a run of hits, including *Sylvia's Mother*, but by 1974 the band went bankrupt, choosing to celebrate the fact with an album of the same name. After dropping the 'Medicine Show' part of their name they continued to make the charts with the likes of *Only Sixteen*, *A Little Bit More*, *When You're In Love With A Beautiful Woman* and *Sexy Eyes* but with their style taking on distinct disco-lite undertones internal morale was declining and Sawyer walked out in 1983.

After leaving the band he pursued a solo career, later forming a rival act called Dr Hook featuring Ray Sawyer. Having tripped on a kerb at a motorway service station in Swindon, the singer's health began to suffer and he did not perform again publicly after a final tour that wrapped in October 2015. Sawyer died in Daytona Beach, Florida, following a brief unspecified illness. "Ray lived the rock and roll life right up to the age of 81," said a statement from his management team, describing their client as a consummate "road dog".

Although Locorriere had not spoken to Sawyer for several years, the singer told *Rolling Stone*: "It does not erase the fact that we were once close friends and shared an important time in both our lives. Deep condolences go out to his family at what must be a difficult time." **DL**

Axl goes Looney

GN'R man teams up with Bugs Bunny in new video.

Axl Rose has dropped his first new song since the album *Chinese Democracy* more than a decade ago – and, incredibly, he did it with the help of Bugs Bunny!

Fans have called for Guns N' Roses to record new material since Slash and Duff McKagan re-joined Guns N' Roses for the Not In This Lifetime tour in 2016, but nobody expected to be rewarded by a track called *Rock The Rock* recorded for The New Looney Tunes cartoon series which will air on the Boomerang network later this year.

Vulture are reporting that Axl will star in an episode of the show. An animated video preview of the series stars the singer and a backing band including Bugs on guitar as they fight off an Earthbound meteor using only the power of "Rawk!" As jaws around the globe hit the floor in disbelief at the unveiling of *Rock The Rock*, Looney Tunes later confirmed that Axl did sing on the track, composed by Joshua Funk and Rob Janas, though nobody else from the Guns N' Roses was involved.

So will there be new music from GN'R in 2019? It's hard to say for sure, though last August Slash told *Classic Rock*: "I think everybody thinks it's a good idea and would like to do it. There's no shortage of ideas from everybody involved, but we've been so busy on the road there hasn't really been time to go in and sit down and go, 'Okay, we're going to make a record.'"

More recently, when asked about the possibility of a new GN'R single being heard before the year's end, guitarist Richard Fortus told a radio interviewer: "It could definitely happen." **DL**

JAMES HETFIELD: GETTY/RAY SAWYER: GETTY

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Fantasy

Celebrating Sabbath

'50 Years' exhibition to run in Birmingham this summer.

The 50th anniversary of Black Sabbath will be celebrated this summer at an exhibition in the group's home city of Birmingham. Collating personal photographs and memorabilia loaned from the band members, as well as portraits and stories from their fans, 50 Years takes place at the Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery on Chamberlain Square from June 22 to September 29 as part of the Home Of Metal project, which aims to celebrate the heavy music that was born in the Black Country. Booking details and ticket prices are yet to be confirmed.

"It's an honour to be a part of the Home Of Metal," says Ozzy Osbourne. "I'm just a guy from Birmingham who's been blessed to have had such dedicated fans throughout my career. I am nothing without them."

In other celebratory news, Sabbath are to receive a Lifetime Achievement Grammy Award at a ceremony in LA on May 11.

Tony Iommi has also confirmed that he is working on a remix of Sabbath's 1995 album *Forbidden*, controversially produced by Body Count guitarist Ernie C, for re-release. "I really like the album but I was never happy with the overall sound," the guitarist explains. **DL**

Black Sabbath: exhibition in their home city.

Nick Mason honoured

Pink Floyd drummer awarded a CBE in New Year's honours.

Nick Mason has been awarded the Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen's New Year's honours list. Since co-founding the band in 1965, drummer Mason is the only member of Pink Floyd to have played on all of their albums. The CBE is just one title down from a Knighthood.

Singer, guitarist and songwriter Gordon Giltrap picked up an MBE, as did The Alarm's Mike Peters for his charity work. Long-serving booking agent Neil Warnock, who has close ties to the music charity Nordoff Robbins, was also awarded an MBE.

Meanwhile, Mason recently told *Rolling Stone* of his "disappointment" that his former Floyd bandmates Roger Waters and David Gilmour remain "at loggerheads". Mason believes the problem is that "Roger doesn't really respect David. He feels that writing is everything, and that guitar playing and the singing are something that I won't say anyone can do, but that everything should be judged on the writing rather than the playing." **DL**

NEWS

Former Whitesnake, Thin Lizzy, Blue Murder and Tygers Of Pan Tang guitarist **John Sykes** is to release his first solo album in 19 years. As yet untitled, it will be released via Golden Robot Records in the coming months.

Manowar have brought in EV Martel, for eight years a member of their only officially endorsed tribute band, to replace disgraced guitarist Karl Logan on a farewell tour that comes to the UK in April. Logan was arrested last summer and charged with possessing child pornography.

Lindsay Coulson is to quit **King King** at the end of their current tour, ending a 10-year stay with the blues-rock band, who recently signed a new management deal. "I feel unable to commit to the next exciting chapter in King King's success, which will require extensive global touring as well as intensive studio time," he explains.

Mississippi-based newcomers **Bishop Gunn** have confirmed some headline dates to preview a support tour with Slash. See them at: Dublin Bello Bar February 24, Glasgow G2 25 and London Boston Music Room 27.

The Wildhearts (pictured) release a new album, *Renaissance Men*, on May 3. It's the band's first full-length studio album in 10 years. To coincide with the release, they play an eight-date date UK tour in May. See p109 for details.

WELCOME BACK

Meat Puppets

Arizona alt.rock mavericks return with their first new album in 24 years – and even their frontman likes it!

With original drummer Derrick Bostrom rejoining Curt Kirkwood and his brother Chris for the first time in more than 20 years, Arizona alt.rock royalty Meat Puppets have re-formed and are rejuvenated with their beautiful new album *Dusty Notes*. As uncategorisable as ever, the album takes in Americana, country, punk, rock and psych and still sounds like no one else. And for once, even the band's frontman and songwriter Curt Kirkwood is happy with the results.

How did the reunion with Derrick come about?

We connected with him for the Arizona Music and Art Hall of Fame. I contacted him and said: "Hey, we should do this thing as the old three-piece, they want us to play'. We started making the record shortly after that. Shandon [Sahm], the drummer who had been playing with us, moved to Amsterdam, so I called Derrick.

"I don't work that well with other people. I need my minions."

How come you'd drifted apart?

We were flying pretty high in the mid-nineties. We were working a lot, my brother became addicted to heroin, Derrick got jaded with the whole thing, and it was hard to keep it just about music. He took a step back, so I was by myself. I moved to Texas, put three new guys in. Then when that fell apart I had a band with [former Nirvana bassist] Krist Novoselic and Bud Gaugh from [US ska punks] Sublime called Eyes Adrift. That was fun. It lasted until Novoselic decided to become a politician. Then my brother got well.

Your son Elmo's in the band now. Did you encourage him to follow in your footsteps?

Not at all. He did it on his own. He has a lot of different influences than me. He became a really good guitar player. There was no encouragement from me, he just loves doing it.

How was it to be recognised by the Arizona Hall of Fame?

It was fun. I like it because I've always said we couldn't have done the band anywhere but Phoenix. The environment there: the lack of anything to do except get baked in the sun, smoke weed and drink beer.

What are the highlights of the new record for you?

The one I didn't write, *Sea Of Heartbreak*. I always like the covers. It gets your head above the surface of your own crap. I always leave the studio feeling like I've done what I can, but more often than not I don't feel like playing any of it. But this time it's all stuck. All the originals are fun to play. It's a beautiful record. I feel like I'm a pretty good judge, because I don't usually like what I do that much.

Is there any dream collaboration you'd like to explore?

Not really. I don't work that well with other people. I need my minions that I can push around. I've just always worked with my buddies.

It's nice that the Nirvana connection was there with Eyes Adrift, because a lot of people discovered you through their MTV Unplugged. How much did that change things for you?

It changed everything. It made our own record company put a little more into our album after that. And more people got to know about us. It was a wonderful thing to have happen. **EJ**

Dusty Notes is released on March 8 via Megaforce Records.

BLACK SABBATH: GETTY/THE WILDHEARTS: ORESS/MEAT PUPPETS: PRESS.

> **"*Appetite For Destruction* is the album that inspired us to pick up our instruments."**

★ HIGH HOPES

King Creature

Opening for your hero is one thing, getting the nod from that same legend is even better.

THERE AREN'T MANY better endorsements for a rock band starting out than getting the stamp of approval from Lemmy. Which is what happened to Cornish rockers King Creature.

"We found out that Motörhead were playing this venue in the town where we all lived," remembers vocalist and bassist Dave Kellaway. "Obviously when you've got your heroes on your doorstep you want to open for them."

This was back in 2015, when King Creature were a new band with only an EP to their name. The four-piece contacted the venue to see if they could open for their heroes, but were turned down. But they weren't about to give up.

"We were involved with Marshall Amplification at that point, so they sent our music to Lemmy. Lemmy said he liked it, and wanted us to do the show. We then got an email from the venue, from the same guy who had said no before, saying that we could come and play!" Kellaway says, laughing. "Unfortunately that turned out to be their last UK show. But we did meet them, and after that things sort of catapulted."

King Creature went from practising in a draughty barn in the Cornish countryside ("It got a bit windy in the winter, we had to wear hats and coats!") to touring with bands such as Therapy?, and receiving acclaim for their 2017 debut *Volume One*, which brims with equal parts heavy and melodic sounds that mash together hefty Black Label Society-style riffs with a 90s garage-rock vibe. Lemmy's recommendation might have helped to speed up their success, but it seems fair to say they would have got there anyway.

King Creature are currently working on album number two, due this year. In the interim they've released the acoustic *To The Bone* EP which includes some reworkings of tracks from their debut, and sees their heavy sounds twisted into a rootsy, almost outlaw country style. It's an intriguing take on their music, and the idea for it came by chance.

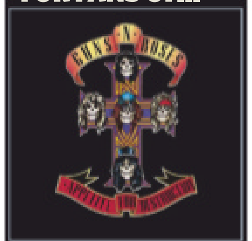
"Last year we were in the BBC Amplify event in London and did about two sets a day. We were told that we were disturbing Jo Whiley's seminar because we were too loud. So Marshall sorted us out with some acoustic guitars, and it actually went down really well, so there was a suggestion to do an acoustic EP.

"We don't want to change what people think of the band," he adds, insisting that this change in sound isn't permanent, "this is just showing a different side to us."

This year King Creature are set to play more shows as well as finish and release that second album, which Dave says will be full of "big, catchy choruses and ballsy-as-hell riffs". "I thought the first album seemed a bit unfocused," he admits, "but I think the new one will really define who we are." **HMK**

To The Bone (EP) is out now via Marshall Records.

FOR FANS OF...



"Appetite For Destruction is an album that we all love in the band," Kellaway says enthusiastically of Guns N' Roses' iconic debut. "It's the ultimate blueprint of how an album should be. Everything about it is perfect, and it's the album that inspired us to pick up our instruments. An absolute classic."

Green River

Swallow My Pride

A hate song about a disintegrating relationship, it became not only Green River's signature song but also an important one in the soundtrack to the 90s.

Words: **Sleazegrinder**

Upon first listen you might not detect the wicked gravity of *Swallow My Pride*. After all, it sounds like what it is: an ugly balled fist of fuzz and fury fuelled in equal parts by the hazy drug-doom of Black Sabbath and the flailing teenage electricity of Black Flag; a loud and rancourous hate song about a fizzling relationship between a horny young creep (singer Mark Arm, presumably) and his right-wing, God-fearing, gun-toting girlfriend.

But Green River weren't just a gang of skinny, greasy-haired young assholes from some forgotten corner of America. Well, they were that in 1987, sure, but as time rolled on, the legacy of the band spread far and wide. Their break-up spawned Mudhoney and Mother Love Bone (and eventually Pearl Jam), and Sub Pop, the tiny, go-nowhere record label they were on, would eventually sign Nirvana, turning Seattle into an unlikely rock'n'roll Mecca and kick-starting the entire grunge movement. *Swallow My Pride* is Green River's best-known song, their very own *Free Bird*, and therefore it carries not only the band's legacy on it's back, but really, also the whole goddamn 1990s. That song is some magical, legendary shit, with ripples that are still being felt today. Not that anybody could see that coming back then.

"We were anything but legendary at the time," laughs Green River bassist Jeff Ament. "If we were legendary for anything, it was for bringing Jello to a show and getting it all over the monitors [in January 1986, opening for the Butthole Surfers]. We weren't allowed to play in Seattle for a year."

Green River formed two years before the Jello incident, and recorded the first version of *Swallow My Pride* just a few months later. It appeared on their first EP, the comparatively obscure *Come On Down* (Homestead Records), a noisy, violent collection of sprawling proto-grunge that showcased the unique vocal stylings of Mark Arm. His band chugged along in weird, cacophonous spasms behind him. It was death on 10 legs, and their commercial potential was zilch.

A year later. Steve Turner, the architect behind *Swallow*'s signature riff, quit the band abruptly. He was replaced by a fresh-faced young metal guitarist, Stone Gossard, and the band's sound began to veer into a sort of psychedelic death-glam, which came to a head on their second (and last) record, the vital *Rehab Doll*. That album's signature track was a new, super-sized take on *Swallow My Pride*. One that not only added vocals from Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon, but inexplicably also threw in a Blue Öyster Cult chorus (*This Ain't The Summer Of Love*) and a Stooges reference (*'Deep inside, I feel alright'*) as a bonus. It was like a road map to the early seventies through the darkest path possible.

"That was so much of our relationship as a band back then, trading records and turning each other on to new bands," says Ament. "I mean, I remember hearing the Stooges for the first time in high school and going: 'I mean, it's okay. It's not Ted Nugent'. I sorta had to go through punk rock and hardcore before I came back to the Stooges and went like: 'Wow, this is incredible!' But, you know, I was thirteen the first time I heard them. I didn't get it. Anyway, that's how we developed, really. I still have mix tapes that Mark made for me at the time. I know I made tapes for him, too. We were crazy about music."

Swallow My Pride was produced by Bruce Calder at Steve Lawson Studios, the "best studio in Seattle", according to Ament. "We couldn't actually afford it. We worked on it from ten at night to six in the morning, so we got it for half the rate. I think we did the whole record in about five or six days," he says. And really, had they not lost their minds halfway through, they probably could have done it in half that.

"We were going through an experimental phase," Ament says. "I remember Mark sang one of the songs under a piano, so you can hear all the piano wires resonating. We were just trying everything, but I don't know if any of that ever came off. I mean, we still just sounded like a three-chord rock band. I don't know if the anvil was necessary."

The anvil?

"During *Rehab Doll* I was really into weird industrial music. I had this idea in my head that I wanted to create a snare sound that was like hitting an anvil. So we got an anvil and we used it to trigger the snare. The original mix of *Rehab Doll* is fucking crazy. Honestly, it's like, 'What are they thinking?' But it's mostly because I was really into Love And Rockets. There were some fucking crazy snare sounds in the eighties, so I was going for that, some crazy goth thing. But it just came out really hard rock."

Interestingly, *Swallow*'s lyrical bent (*'Yes, there's a spirit in the air, we're more American than anywhere/Well, I just smiled cos I could tell this little girl's going to hell'*) has boomeranged back to relevance in spectacular fashion, making it one of GR's more prescient songs.

"Given how divided the country is right now, it does seem really relevant again," Ament agrees. "But at the time, I didn't even know what it was about. Usually you'd get little bits of the lyrics here and there during rehearsals, but I never really knew what the lyrics to the songs were until I was putting together the artwork for the albums, and I'd be like, 'Holy shit, that's what this is about!' Mark was always a great lyricist."

"I remember hearing the Stooges for the first time in high school and going: 'It's okay, but it's not Ted Nugent'."

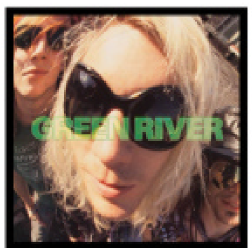
While Ament acknowledges that *Swallow* has become the band's signature song, he doesn't even remember why they re-recorded it for the album.

"I figure it was because Sonic Youth were in town and we thought it would be a good opportunity for us to have Kim sing on it," he says. "But we had plenty of songs, so I don't know why we redid one."

Was it worth it?

"I think I prefer the original," he says with a laugh.

Deluxe editions of Dry As A Bone and Rehab Doll are out now on SubPop.



DRIED-UP RIVER
Green River broke up by the time *Rehab Doll* was released in 1988. Mark Arm cites Ament and Gossard's major-label ambitions as the deciding factor in the implosion, but Ament contends their goals were far more humble.

"I remember a year before that record we played a bunch of shows down the West Coast and we had (Black Flag bassist) Chuck Dukowski come out to see us," he recalls. "We honestly thought it would be amazing, to be on SST, because we loved a lot of the bands on that label. But we got rejected. Chuck went: 'Nah. Not really our thing.' That was a huge bummer. We didn't even imagine a major label as a possibility."

Ament's new band, Mother Love Bone, signed to Polydor a year later.

CHARLES PETERSON/PRESS

Green River: the source of more than one great band.

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
June 1988

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
Ha ha!

PERSONNEL
Mark Arm
Vocals
Jeff Ament
Bass
Stone Gossard
Guitar
Bruce Fairweather
Guitar
Alex Vincent
Drums
Kim Gordon
Vocals

WRITTEN BY
Steve Turner

PRODUCEd BY
Bruce Calder

LABEL
Sub Pop

Q&A

Jason Becker

The former guitar prodigy looks back at the long road to his new record, and talks about living with ALS today.

Interview: **Polly Glass**

Any struggling musician in search of inspiration would do well to consider Jason Becker. At 20 he was poised to become a huge rock star, having joined David Lee Roth's band and wowed audiences with his dazzling metal/neo-classical virtuosity. Then, quite suddenly, he developed amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), which left him unable to play the guitar, walk, talk, or breathe independently. Yet he has continued to make music, communicating and creating with painstaking eye-movements. Now 49, he's released a commanding studio album, *Triumphant Hearts*, which has guest appearances from famous friends including Uli Jon Roth, Joe Satriani, Steve Vai, Joe Bonamassa and many more.

***Triumphant Hearts* is a really eclectic record. What were your starting points when it came to writing it?**
My starting points were always to write what I was feeling. I think more along the lines of wanting to tell my story to music, or wanting to make a funky kind of song to honour Prince and use a solo I never used but really liked, or I want to build another type of feeling in a song and use my favourite guitar solo of mine, or I want to compose music that feels like the desert vacations and spaghetti westerns I love. And since I have always loved classical music and have always incorporated it into the music I was playing or writing, I want to include some classical tunes and I want them all to have feeling and soul and substance.

How long, on average, does it take you to compose a song?
It is different for every song. I worked on *Hold On To Love* for many months. Actually, it started with the intro solo, which I wrote in the nineties, so that took twenty years! I was new to lyrics, and it was very personal and I wanted it to really convey my story, what I think and how I think I can (mostly) remain sane. Maybe two years before it was ready for a play-through, because it took a long time to find the right singer. *Triumphant Heart* took about a month to write and sound good, but it took a lot more time to record all of the musicians. *We Are One* took a couple of years too, but to compose, it took a few months.

Alongside the soaring, classically rooted elements, there's a lot of rocking out there. Which rock guitarists that you listen to the most?
These days I love Aleks Sever, and all of my old favourites, like Van Halen, Led Zeppelin, Yes, Pink Floyd, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck, AC/DC, The Beatles and The Band.

You assembled an impressive list of guest players for your record. Did they record their parts in the studio with you, or separately?
They recorded their parts on their own, either at a studio or their home. I did have a visit from Uli before he started *Magic Woman*, and he talked about how he wanted to play it, mostly just as it was. And the sound is always important to him, so I hope he approves of the final result. It is exciting to receive these solos from the best players, and yes, it is stressful to edit them. I always want to do them justice, and between me and my co-producer, Dan, I hope we did that.

Writing music is a slow and painstaking process for Jason.

Songs like *Hold On To Love* are deeply personal. Did it feel weird entrusting that kind of material to other singers and guitarists?
Yes, but mostly it was weird when I was thinking about who might do what [the singing and guitar playing] before I had decided, or heard singers, etcetera. Once I knew who was going to sing and play, and I had heard all of them and thought they were right, it was easy to trust them. I knew they had the skills, and I could hear the heart. After that it's just a matter of making the music work to move other people. I think they all did a wonderful job.

Do you get to check out much new music these days?
Not so much, especially since I have been working so long [about six years] and so hard on my album and I have only a few hours of 'working' time during my day. ALS takes a *lot* of time and energy.

At this point you've spent more of your life with ALS than without it. How is your relationship with the condition today?
I am okay with it. I still get frustrated sometimes, and tired of all that I have to go through. I don't enjoy trips to the hospital, scary bouts of feeling like I can't breathe well enough, being nervous about having a fever, stomach aches, etc. But, I can still make music and I am at home with people I love.

What would you say is the biggest misconception about you?
Maybe that I am always positive and happy, no matter what. I am generally a positive and happy person, but I can get pretty dark and down as well. I understand thinking negatively and I have to talk myself out of it sometimes. When other people try to bring me back to the positive side, sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. That's why I am not always so sure about giving advice, or trying to comfort others myself. I can only say what I find to be true when I do think positively, but I understand if a person chooses not to see that at certain times in their own lives. And I don't feel like the authority on what folks should think or feel. It's different with everyone.

The therapeutic power of music, and the support of your loved ones, have obviously been crucial. What else has helped you the most?
That is a good question. Lately I am not quite sure. I would like to think that the grace of God, and the love of Amma [a Hindu spiritual leader and guru] helps. My pets make me happy [Jason has two cats].

Your dad has said that you don't want to be "a poster boy for ALS". What do you want your legacy to be?
Well, I think what my dad meant by that was that I wanted to be known for my music and not for having ALS. Which is true. I guess if I was known for my work, like Stephen Hawking was, I wouldn't mind being a kind of poster boy if it would bring helpful attention to ALS. I would welcome it. For my legacy, I don't really think about that. I guess that I was a nice guy. Ha ha!

Triumphant Hearts is out now via Music Theories Recordings/Mascot Label Group.

INSET: PAUL HAGGARD

Guitar hero: Jason Becker pre-ALS.

"I still get frustrated sometimes, but I can still make music."

ROSS PELTON/PRESS

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08 NEWCASTLE RIVERSIDE
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10 LEEDS BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB
15 BIRMINGHAM O2 INSTITUTE 2
16 MANCHESTER CLUB ACADEMY
17 NORWICH WATERFRONT STUDIO
21 LONDON THE GARAGE 2
22 BRIGHTON CONCORDE 2
23 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY 2
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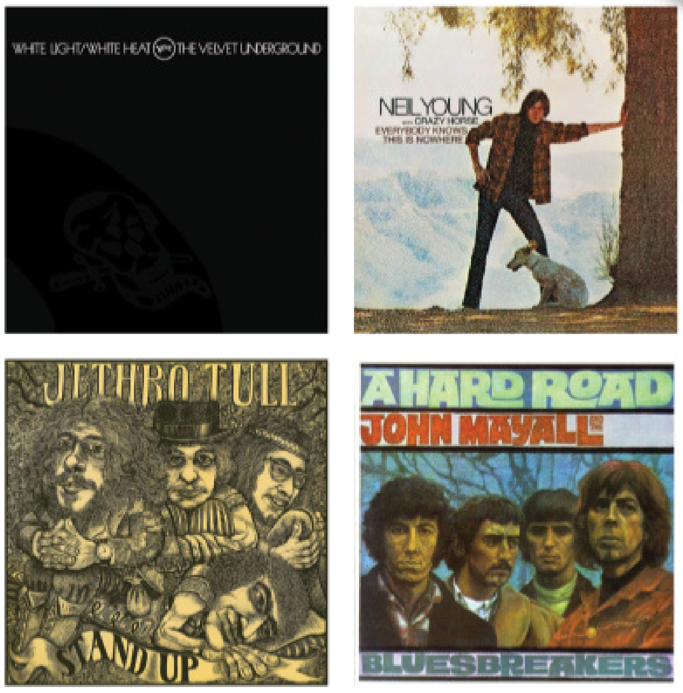
THE REAL 100 GREATEST ALBUMS OF THE 60s



Think you know the greatest albums from this brilliant musical decade? Over the next 55 pages we present the records that *really* mattered.

Words: Max Bell, Bill DeMain, Dave Everley, Hugh Fielder, Ian Fortnam, Polly Glass, Paul Henderson, Rob Hughes, Jo Kendall, Kris Needs, Chris Roberts, Henry Yates

Welcome to our all-conquering rundown of the *Real* 100 Greatest Albums Of The 60s.

1. ONLY ONE ALBUM PER ARTIST/ BAND. Yes we realise that there are several who made multiple excellent LPs in the 60s, but we want to give more people a look-in. Otherwise we could just be looking at a lot of words about The Beatles and the Beach Boys...

2. DON'T JUST PICK THE MOST FAMOUS RECORD. We've included some hidden gems and overlooked greats in this list, so expect the unexpected as well as the more familiar faces.

3. JUSTIFY IT. Why should you care? Read on and find out.

All clear? Good. Now dig in and enjoy...

PTOOFF!

THE DEVIANTS

Underground Impresarios, 1967

100

Britpunk starts here. Cynically spat into the summer of love, *Ptooff!* was the sound of the UK's counter-cultural underground incarnate. Born of bad drugs and worse attitudes, the Mick Farren-fronted Deviants were anti-authoritarian, dope-smoking speed-freaks who matched psych sneers with Agitprop rhetoric. A fiercely independent release (sold via Oz and *IT*) *Ptooff!* combined Zappa cynicism with Fugs insurrection, evocative sounds with garage brutality and proto-Hawkwind commune-ism with sonic sedition. **IF**

Killer track: *Garbage*

CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Columbia, 1969

99

Brassy six-piece political jazz rockers CTA (soon to be just Chicago) were musically a long way from the future soppy balladry of their '76 hit *If You Leave Me Now* when they debuted with this groundbreaking double album, crammed with dazzling musicianship and featuring some marvellously gritty playing from unsung guitar hero Terry Kath. If you think jazz rock isn't for you, take this record for a spin. **PH**

Killer track: *Introduction*

TAKE A RIDE!

MITCH RYDER & THE DETROIT WHEELS

New Voice, 1966

98

Eternally influential, renowned for electrifying live performance and rip-snorting romps through raw-throated and lightning-paced soul, R&B and rock'n'roll standards, Mitch Ryder was an inspiration to a local Detroit community (Stooges, MC5) and a broader blue-collar rock constituency (Mellencamp, Springsteen). This blazing debut, with a three-guitar Detroit Wheels, is energy incarnate. **IF**

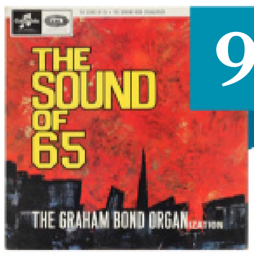
Killer track: *Jenny Take A Ride*

Chicago Transit Authority: jazz-rock pioneers.

THE SOUND OF '65

GRAHAM BOND ORGANIZ ATION

Columbia, 1965



97

Before plummeting into hard drugs and black magic, prog-inventing Hammond organ shaman Graham Bond was a key (but overlooked) catalyst in UK R&B. Despite cloth-eared production, *The Sound Of '65* was a vital document of Bond's classic line-up, which included future Cream rhythm section Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce, and their incendiary live onslaught. **KN**

Killer track: *Wade In The Water*

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Columbia, 1968

96

Led by artist Joseph Byrd and glacial chanteuse Dorothy Moskowitz, unrecognised for decades, The United States Of America's sole album pioneered electronic rock in wildly experimental, blisteringly audacious attacks on their country. Hallucinogenic collages framed pounding acid-rock (*Stranded In Time*), while the dreamy *Love Song For The Dead Che* eulogised the recently-martyred Cuban revolutionary. **KN**

Killer track: *The Garden Of Earthly Delights*

GORILLA

THE BONZO DOG DOO-DAH BAND

Liberty, 1967

95

These art-school friends gleefully butchered the jazz they'd cut their teeth on for this debut. And it didn't stop there; lounge ballads (*I Left My Heart In San Francisco*), film noir (*Big Shot*), 1920s music (*Jollity Farm*) and more were deliciously parodied with savage accuracy. *Urban Spaceman* and *Canyons Of Your Mind* have received more airplay over the years, but *Gorilla* is still one of the most

GETTY

successful marriages of comedy and music the UK has produced. **PG**

Killer track: *Jazz (Delicious Hot, Disgusting Cold)*

LOOK INSIDE THE ASYLUM CHOIR

ASYLUM CHOIR

Smash, 1968

94

The weird and wonderful world of what Leon Russell did between sessioneering for the likes of Phil Spector and more than getting by with Joe Cocker. Alongside future soundtrack ace Marc Benno, this quirky little interlude knocked Zappa, Nilsson, Beatles, The Nazz and Move's maddest moments into a cocked Victorian hat of theatrical bubblegum whimsy. **JK**

Killer track: *Welcome To Hollywood*

DIRTY WATER

THE STANDELLS

Tower, 1966

93

Featuring a hit title track (often cited as the first punk song) written by producer Ed Cobb about being mugged in Boston, *Dirty Water* was the pounding sound of slack-jawed, Los Angeles R&B primitivism stripped to its raw essence and hammered out in 32-bar chunks of sullen urban attitude. As if one hoodlum anthem wasn't enough for one record, *Sometimes Good Guys Don't Wear White* sealed the juvenile delinquent deal. **IF**

Killer track: *Dirty Water*

TAKE A HEART

THE SORROWS

Piccadilly, 1965

92

Coventry rockers The Sorrows pushed a harder, gnarlier brand of the slick R&B that had come to characterise the British mod scene – and would see them branded 'freakbeat' pioneers. From the dark shuffle of the title track to the sweetly hazy qualities of *How Love Used To Be*, it was a rough-cut diamond that's been shadowed in history by bigger cheeses. **PG**

Killer track: *Take A Heart*

CRISTO REDENTOR

HARVEY MANDEL

Philips, 1968

91

The best instrumental psych album you've probably never heard, *Cristo Redentor* was the debut solo recording from a guitar virtuoso; a pioneer of controlled feedback and two-hand tapping who'd enjoyed brief tenures with Canned Heat and John Mayall. Mandel's wall-of-sound chops (that saw 1975's Stones come calling) were augmented by Wrecking Crew Monkees sessioneers Art Stavro and Eddie Hoh, along with Pete Drake and Kenny Buttrey (of Dylan's *Nashville Skyline* band). **IF**

Killer track: *Wade In The Water*

HEAVY

IRON BUTTERFLY

Atco, 1968

90

Inevitably overshadowed by their metal-minting, million-selling monster *In-A-Gadda -Da-Vida*, San Diego hard rockers Iron Butterfly's *Heavy* debut more interestingly captured their frenetic feet-finding; intrepidly exploring freakbeat, proto-prog and psychedelic rock, lashed with Doug Ingle's classically-tinged organ and Danny Weis's blues-wailing guitar. The bludgeoning delivery of this short-lived first line-up saved the occasionally weak songwriting. Reportedly influenced Jimmy Page when naming Led Zeppelin. **KN**

Killer track: *Possession*

THE FUGS

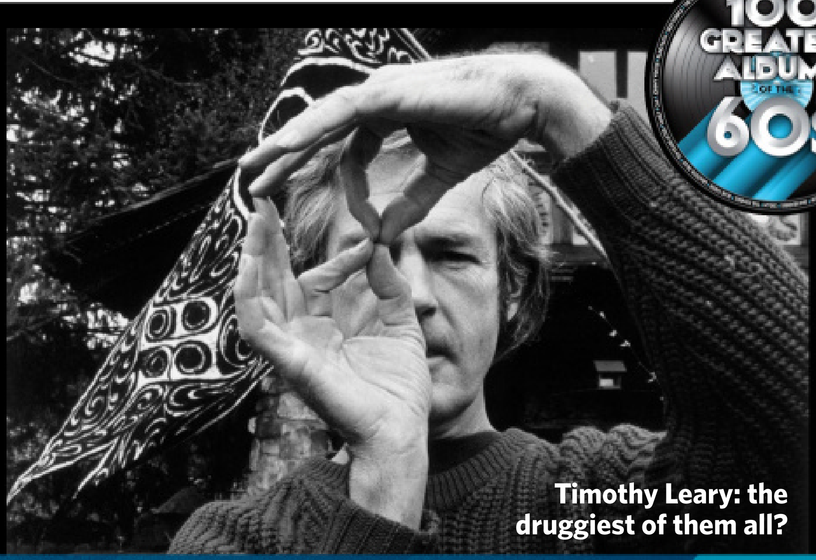
THE FUGS

ESP-Disk, 1966

89

Anyone still labouring under the notion that alternative rock began in the 80s clearly missed out on The Fugs. The anarchic New Yorkers packed sharp satire, pastiche and crude humour into their fever dream of free jazz, poetry and avant-rock, positing them at the forefront of the East Coast counterculture. It was controversial enough to warrant investigation by the FBI. **RH**

Killer track: *Kill For Peace*



Timothy Leary: the druggiest of them all?

GETTY

Turn on, Tune In, Drop Out

Drug culture in the 60s.

The 60s was the decade of firing up and freaking out, when joints and tabs inspired artists to seek new psychedelic horizons. But rock was only following the lead of previous genres. Composer Hector Berlioz was smoking opium in 1830 when he wrote *Symphonie Fantastique*. Jazz trumpeter Louis Armstrong sang the praises of reefer in 1928 with *Muggles*, and tortured artists such as Billie Holiday and Bill Evans numbed themselves into euphoria with heroin. Country & Western musicians like Johnny Cash were popping amphetamines like candy in the early 60s. But rock, being faster and louder, amplified drugs into a mass culture phenomenon. Or as Bob Dylan put it: *'Everybody must get stoned.'*

And arguably Dylan was the decade's pied piper, the first major artist to let both marijuana and LSD shape his music. In 1964, as he moved away from folky social commentary to *'take me on a trip upon your magic swirling ship'* in *Mr. Tambourine Man*, Dylan famously shared some reefer with The Beatles. Paul McCartney later said the high felt like "thinking for the first time." Soon after, the group was "smoking marijuana for breakfast." The profound change – vision, depth, knowingness – heard on 1965's *Rubber Soul* marked the moment when music broke free of old rules and neural pathways opened wide. Soon the Mary Jane parade included The Who, Donovan, the Rolling Stones and The Doors.

But pot was only the gateway drug. LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) had been used for decades by psychiatrists to promote insight in patients. Now, thanks to homemade batches produced by wayward chemist Augustus Owsley Stanley III, it was spreading everywhere. In 1966-7 alone, *Life* magazine estimated a million doses of LSD were consumed. Leading the charge was former Harvard psychiatrist-turned-evangelist Timothy Leary, who famously urged America's youth to "turn on, tune in and drop out". That credo fueled 1966's crop of rock's most inspired freakouts – *Tomorrow Never Knows, Strawberry Fields Forever, Eight Miles High, Shapes Of Things, Daydream* and *Good Vibrations*. Whether *'turning off your mind and floating downstream'* or *'falling on your face in somebody's new mowed lawn,'* these were songs that lysergically plumbed the secrets of space and time. Meanwhile, Leary's west coast counterpart Ken Kesey and his "acid test" parties nurtured the jams of Jefferson Airplane and Grateful Dead, while ushering in the psychedelic rock of Love, Blues Magoos and The 13th Floor Elevators.

But the hue of things went quickly from colourful to dark. Reflecting a culture increasingly soaked in racial violence, war and assassinations, drugs followed suit. The end of the decade was marked by the Stones drug bust at Redlands, murder at Altamont, and the overdose deaths of Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin.

Looking back at the long, strange trip of rock music and drugs through the 1960s, the Dead's Bob Weir once said, "Not much of the ideology survived, but the music, the art and the feeling behind it has flourished." **BDM**

The Electric Prunes: psychedelic explorers.

THE SECT
DOWNLINERS SECT
Columbia, 1964

88

Contemporaries of the Stones, Twickenham's Downliners Sect gained a reputation as the most primitive of all British R&B boomers. While The Yardbirds bawled and The Pretty Things mauled, the Sect grasped the 12-bar form by its scruff, dragged it around the back of Club 51 and pummelled it insensible. Fast, frantic, guitar/vocalist Don Craine wore an aristocracy-mocking, Billy Childish-inspiring deerstalker hat and this, their debut, boasted the appropriately titled *I'm A Sect Maniac*. **IF**

Killer track: ***I Wanna Put A Tiger In Your Tank***

PRESENTING THE FABULOUS RONETTES
FEATURING VERONICA
THE RONETTES
Philles, 1964

87

Ronnie Spector's vocal slathered a degree of sex and drama across the dark reverberations of Phil Spector's rock baroque wall-of-sound no other artist could quite conjure. When this reet-petite Spanish Harlem firecracker applied her strident tones and seductive keening vibrato to *Baby, I Love You* resistance was futile. Both The Beatles and Stones supported the Ronettes, whose Cleopatra eyeliner and bad-girl bouffants latterly inspired Thunders and Winehouse alike. **IF**

Killer track: ***Be My Baby***

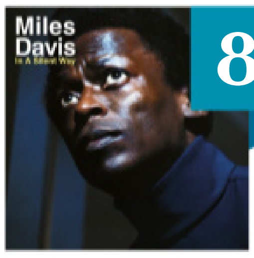
BOOKENDS
SIMON & GARFUNKEL
Columbia, 1968

86

Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel's moody concept album explored the journey from childhood to old age and lifted the pop-folk duo into the arty big leagues with The Beatles and Bob Dylan. Like the Richard Avedon portrait on the cover, the songs sounded composed in minimalist black and white, rich with light and shadow and worthy of long contemplation. **BDM**

Killer track: ***Old Friends***

IN A SILENT WAY
MILES DAVIS
Columbia, 1969



85

Proto-ambient and born of after hours nocturnal jams, Miles Davis' first fusion album, the opening chapter of an electric period that would later produce the biting dissonance of *Bitches Brew*, was neither wholly rock nor was it entirely jazz. It matched the evolving improvisational techniques of the former (courtesy of John McLaughlin) with the heavy-lidded cool and artistic ambition of the latter to unbound atmospheric effect. Jazz-rock's timeless year zero. **IF**

Killer track: ***In A Silent Way***

THE ELECTRIC PRUNES
THE ELECTRIC PRUNES
Reprise, 1967

84

Though latterly smothered under the grand ambitions of *Mass In F Minor* composer/arranger David Axelrod, the original incarnation of L.A. psychedelic explorers The Electric Prunes was a far more hallucinogenic proposition. These Prunes were a five-man vehicle for a largely female songwriting team – Nancie Mantz and Annette Tucker wrote their self-titled debut's first accompanying hit, the immortally mind-expanding *I Had Too Much To Dream (Last Night)*, Tucker and Jill Jones its similarly trippy successor *Get Me To The World On Time*. **IF**

Killer track: ***I Had Too Much To Dream Last Night)***

GLORIA
THE SHADOWS OF KNIGHT
Dunwich, 1966

83

Like any self-respecting teenage garage band, Chicago's Shadows Of Knight reinterpreted British blues-boom roughage, while adding their city's traditional blues flavours. After hitting big with their scabrous take on Them's *Gloria*, the first of

Downliners Sect: fast and furious.

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their three albums ravaged the Chess blues songbook, delivering chestnuts like *I Got My Mojo Working* with high-octane energy. **KN**

Killer track: *I Just Want To Make Love To You*

TIM BUCKLEY

TIM BUCKLEY

Elektra, 1966

82

Though Buckley was anxious to move into the experimental sphere of the jazz horn players he'd grown up on, his debut stayed close to the folk rock idiom that producers Jac Holzman and Paul A. Rothchild signed him for. That gave him a winning combination of naivety and sophistication (he was 19 at the time) exemplified in *Strange Street Affair Under Blue*. **MB**

Killer track: *Aren't You The Girl?*

THE SEEDS

THE SEEDS

GNP Crescendo, 1966

81

Led by singer Sky Saxon's lascivious rasp and Daryl Hooper's luminous keyboards, the Seeds were the prototype freakbeat garage-punks, with singles *Can't Seem To Make You Mine* and *Pushin' Too Hard* trailering an album comprising all band originals and overloaded attitude. Released in April, it was followed by October's psych masterpiece *A Web Of Sound*, influencing the Velvets and Stooges. **KN**

Killer track: *Evil Hoodoo*

YES

YES

Atlantic, 1969

80

The young Yes were still casting around for their definitive sound (and line-up), but this debut already captured their desire to explore, experiment and fuse contrasting genres. It also showcased an extraordinary singer in Jon Anderson, a dazzling level of virtuosity and the band's often overlooked power and muscle as they took the leading rock tropes of the 60s and forged them into new shapes. **CR**

Killer track: *Survival*

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In The Beginning…

Yes's Jon Anderson on their debut album.

"A lot of young people," Jon Anderson remarks, "listen to that early music and say: 'What the hell is this? It's pretty wild! It's out there…but it's great.'" Yes's debut is sometimes neglected in comparison to the proggier oceans into which they dived in the 70s, but its mix of originals and covers more than hinted at the way they were going to stretch and warp conventional structures. It also revealed a surprisingly beefy, power-packing ensemble, from the irresistible bass-hook intro of its mighty opener *Beyond And Before*. Straight away, this band had you paying attention. Jon: "It was the 60s pushing into the 70s, musically. A wonderful time. I was following in the footsteps of The Beatles and Revolver, Frank Zappa, John McLaughlin…When I hear it now I'm amazed at how well-recorded it was for the time. Yes music became an energy all to itself."

With a rhythm section as in-your-face as Chris Squire and Bill Bruford (the drummer's first time in a recording studio) and a vocalist as unusual yet mesmerising as Anderson, Yes drew listeners into a big affirmative from the off. No Howe or Wakeman yet: Peter Banks' guitars and Tony Kaye's keyboards exhibit different qualities to the sounds we tend to think of as trademark Yes. More elemental and route one, perhaps, but everything's relative. The group's influences were less abstract than you'd expect. "Jon and I realised we were both fans of Simon & Garfunkel," said Squire, "and that album of Jimmy Webb songs by The 5th Dimension, *The Magic Garden*. Big American harmonies. We thought it'd be great to have something that blended great vocals and great instrumentalists. That was our blueprint." Anderson so loved the process that "I would sleep in the studio." He was also into "Sibelius, Stravinsky, electronic and indigenous music," but at this early stage these colours were undercurrents, not yet commandeering the driver's seat.

"I was following in the footsteps of The Beatles, Frank Zappa, John McLaughlin…"

Jon Anderson

Recorded in July 1969 in Advision and Trident studios, *Yes* was produced by Paul Clay – with whom the band were underwhelmed. Banks complained that he was a "film soundtracks guy" with no real feeling for rock bands. For all that, the sound is crisp, strong, and swings, and according to Lester Bangs "insinuates itself into your routine with a totally unexpected thrust". That killer opening – a great track with which to stun unbelievers by playing guess-who-this-is? – got momentum rolling, and the delightful cover of The Byrds' *I See You* spotlights Anderson's angelic tones and the band's ability to shine while simmering. There's an even bolder cover later, as The Beatles' *Every Little Thing* is teased out with exquisite awareness of space and restraint. Yet Yes' own material holds its own. *Sweetness* (deemed "drippy" by Bruford) is a gorgeous high-on-life love song, since covered by New York dream-poppers Luna, while the finale *Survival*, written by Anderson, is a sign of wings to come, flying through ideas and moods with easy grace. Yes were to venture closer to the edge, but this dextrous, dynamic debut proclaimed them as hungry, resolute beginners. **CR**

When Worlds Collide

Before they became 70s chart stars and (later) a beloved heritage act, **Mott The Hoople** were a wilder, more dangerous proposition – as their incendiary debut album proved.

Words: **Kris Needs**

79
MOTT THE HOOPLE
MOTT THE HOOPLE
Island, 1969

Killer track:
Half Moon Bay

Mott The Hoople hadn't even played a gig when they recorded their debut album shortly after madcap visionary producer Guy Stevens put them together, looking to create his dream collision between the Stones and electric Dylan.

Although the latter's influence on their formation period can't be denied, Mott's own infernal alchemy started brewing from first rehearsals, hatched into an elemental monster in the studio which sprouted huge, beating wings when they took it live.

At first the new band, then workingly-titled Savage Rose & Fixable, seemed like a marriage made in hell. Stevens' mental chess game had placed struggling songwriter Ian Hunter Patterson – who'd reluctantly bluffed through his audition at Denmark Street's Regent Sound Studios, sporting a brown corduroy suit and singing Dylan's *Like A Rolling Stone* – with a gaggle of younger Herefordshire country boys who'd been treading the UK's boards as Silence, but piqued Guy's interest with their attitude. At that time they announced themselves as guitarist Mick Ralphs, organist Terry Allen, bassist Pete Watts and drummer Terry Griffin.

"Guy liked Ian the minute he walked in, because he had that charisma and the shades," recalls Ralphs. "He didn't care what he played or sounded like, he looked right."

Stevens was the driven rock and soul evangelist who had soundtracked the R&B boom (DJing at Soho's Scene club), created Procol Harum and was now Island Records' livewire A&R dynamo. He uncannily envisioned something uniquely spectacular erupting out of the band's unlikely chemistry, including Hunter's potential as a stellar songwriter and street-savvy rock'n'roll star.

"It was in there waiting but it wouldn't have come out if Guy hadn't brought it out," Hunter says. "Everybody has their hopes and dreams, but they're buried by being told you're crap. He was the first person who took a blind bit of interest in me and and built my confidence up. If it hadn't been for him seeing that glimmer of whatever I wasn't aware of, I'd still be working in the factory. I found it very flattering that he would put all this effort in to make me feel better. Usually people put this effort in to make themselves look better."

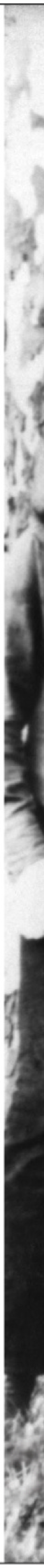
Stevens would have fronted the band himself but, as Hunter says, "he couldn't sing and was incensed because he couldn't play anything. We were working through him." But if Hunter started as Stevens's vehicle he soon started showing an aptitude and determination for writing songs for the new band; perhaps initially ingrained by working for a London songwriting firm. From the first of eleven days rehearsing at the Pied Bull in Islington, Hunter would get there early, writing on the piano, drawing with bared-soul poetic vision from hard life experiences, overcoming a divide between seasoned city pro and younger country boys. "I'd had forty-four jobs. I knew this was my one and only shot," reasons Hunter.

Early compositions such as the racism-savaging *Road To Birmingham* and *The Times They Are A-Changin'* soundalike *If The World Saluted You* (later retitled *Backsliding Fearlessly*) were transformed when the band pumped them with latent elemental power that seemed to course from their loins like a giant electrified snake. The epic *Half Moon Bay* reached a peak aboard its mighty riff, Hunter singing with authoritative control before the *Moonlight Sonata*-organ-abusing helicopter attack heralded another behemoth climax. This merciless approach to the dominant ballads also erupted when Stevens suggested covering Doug Sahm's lonesome ballad *At The Crossroads* from 1969's Mendocino set and Sonny Bono's *Laugh At Me*, along with the band's idea to tackle the Kinks' *You Really Got Me* after spotting its creators arriving at Pye Studios. After trying vocal versions, the song swelled into the riotous ten-minute instrumental that would soon spark live mayhem, but was edited into two tracks for the album. "We played it very fast, very high energy; very uncool for those days," said drummer Griffin. Instrumental, *Rabbit Foot And Toby Time* provided another rocker.

Recording took two and a half weeks at Morgan Studios in north-west London, where the band experienced Stevens's manic coaching; gurning, hurling chairs and gesticulating wildly as he delivered incendiary rants and fired the band to greater heights of energy and performance.

The band still needed a name. Ruling out Brain Haulage and Ball & Chain, Stevens remembered a blackly humorous novel by Willard Manus he'd read in Wormwood Scrubs while incarcerated for drugs offences in 1968. It concerned an eccentric 'Hoople' (US slang for loser) called Norman Mott, who didn't fit into society so sailed away in a hot air balloon to find himself "two miles from heaven" (Manus later said he got the character from a bum called Major Hoople in a comic strip). Stevens had been holding the name back after the junkie inmate who lent it to him died, so Mott The Hoople were christened and the album's first acetate mailed to selected tastemakers.

The world first heard about Mott The Hoople in Pete Frame's then recently established *ZigZag* magazine. September's issue



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"[Producer] Guy Stevens didn't care what Ian Hunter played or sounded like, he looked right."
Mick Ralphs

Mott in December '69, at writer Kris Needs's school dance.

boasted his interview with Stevens, covering an amazing story that started with him being president of the Chuck Berry fan club and ended with Mott The Hoople. Stevens gleefully acknowledged the Dylan influence, making it sound like a mission as he enthused: "The record is amazingly like Dylan in places, simply because Dylan is like, in the sky to them. They are completely and utterly on their backs about Dylan. We're having a picture of Dylan inside the sleeve, because it's all about Bob Dylan. But, at the same time, they have a thing of their own. We're calling the album *Talking Bear Mountain Picnic Disaster Dylan Blues*."

Describing the album as "staggering", Frame becomes Mott's first and most vociferous press champion, insisting on putting a centrefold photo of Mott in that issue (Stevens took Hunter's place as he missed his bus to the session!).

"Guy was just a complete mad-ass rock'n'roll maniac," recalls Frame. "He was a raving, *raving* loony, the sort of guy you hung around with for five minutes and were just in thrall with his enthusiasm. We hit it off immediately. Island Records was the coolest label by far at that time. Guy sent me a test pressing of the first Mott album before I'd ever heard of them. I was just completely blown away. Before we'd often talked about the great sound of juxtaposed organ and piano in the same band. Procol Harum did it, and Guy formed them too."

The test pressing would not end up the finished release, after Stevens decided it was too heavy with ballads and demanded another rocker. Ralphs quickly wrote the dirty chugging road anthem *Rock And Roll Queen*, its grainy swagger dunked in dense *Beggars Banquet*-style sound. The lyrics were to-the-point: *'She's just a rock'n'roll queen, you know what I mean/And I'm just a rock'n'roll star'*. Released as the first single in November (*Road To Birmingham* the non-album B-side), it struck as a much-needed call-to-arms for rock – as *Anarchy In The UK* would for punk several years later.

The first time *Mott The Hoople* was heard by the outside world was when *At The Crossroads* appeared on Island's *Nice Enough To Eat* budget-sampler alongside King Crimson, Free, Jethro Tull, Traffic, Fairport Convention, Spooky Tooth and bonkers Stevens side-project Heavy Jelly. It boded well for the album as its Stones ballad-style guitar curled around Allen's rich organ, Watts's bass teasing with the monolithic riff that would ignite one of the climactic home-stretch codas that elevated Mott's ballads; relentless and majestic, topped with Hunter's spontaneous vocal outcries. There was already something tantalisingly different about this band, on the surface marking the arrival of Ian Hunter but never forgetting the band pushing him, underpinned by the volcanic rhythm section of recently deceased Overend Watts and Buffin.

Housed in a sleeve based on Maurits Escher's 1943 lithograph *Reptiles* and now titled *Mott The Hoople* (after ruling out *The Twilight Of Pain Through Doubt*, from an Italian album unearthed by Ralphs), the album unveiled the new monikers Guy had designated for the group; Ian lost Patterson in favour of his middle name Hunter, Terry Allen gained his middle name to become Verden, Terry Griffin arrived at Buffin from a childhood, Watts-awarded nickname, and Watts' middle name Overend was moved forward.

> *"I'd had forty-four jobs. I knew this was my one and only shot."*
> Ian Hunter

The album was met with lukewarm reviews from the conservative music press but enthusiasm from underground publications like *International Times*, which declared: "They have brought a tenuous (and probably transitory) sophistication to rock and roll and in doing so have transcended the acid/progressive rock of the late 60s and become the only rock and roll band of the 70s currently around… I find what traits of Dylan there are in Mott The Hoople's music pleasantly nostalgic. It's like my favourite bits of Dylan have been cut out and preserved in a thick, spicy sauce."

Mott didn't have to care about critics when their album got positive responses from Roger McGuinn and Bob Dylan himself. During Mott's first US tour in 1970, Hunter was standing outside a New York club when a figure walked inside singing *At The Crossroads*. "I thought he was taking the piss," thought Hunter. When the pair's eyes met again inside the club, Hunter recognized Dylan. "He said: 'Mott The Hoople!', then started jumping up and down, singing *At The Crossroads*, and he's got all the lyrics. I went to see Bob all through the 70s; the first time I ever got to see him. I was blown away. I've been very much into Bob since. He's just the main man for me now and always will be."

Mott The Hoople now sounds like an ethereal, occasionally unhinged distillation of everything that was great about heady, revolutionary '69, soaked in those key influences but flying the deeper spirit that would blanket upcoming albums like *Mad Shadows* and *Brain Capers*. Soon Mott would become the UK's wildest live rock'n'roll act, forging templates for glam and punk during their short-lived reign as 70s chart stars before buckling under their internal frictions – and later becoming a beloved heritage act with Hunter long acknowledged as one of the UK's greatest singer-songwriters. This earliest model was a more dangerous beast, swimming against prevailing musical tides to ignite its own, through widescreen rock'n'roll fantasy and self-harming honesty, extra edge coming from being the closest the world got to a Guy Stevens brain-scan, with all the scary carnage that entailed.

Glowering from the vaults like an old testament scroll, *Mott The Hoople* still entrances as their first, eccentrically-tinted but lustrously garnished battle cry, showing a band pilfering from rock's existing blueprints before giving the world equally-resonant ones of their own. We were so lucky to have had them.

JETHRO TULL TELL THE STORY OF THEIR FIRST NUMBER ONE ALBUM

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ON SALE NOW

Grateful Dead at Fillmore West: *Live/Dead* caught the band on a West Coast high.

GETTY

SURFIN' BIRD
TRASHMEN
Garrett, 1963

78

It's safe to assume that, by now, whether courtesy of the Ramones, Cramps or Peter Griffin, everybody has heard about the bird. Obviously, the idiot savant genius of *Surfin' Bird*'s title blather wasn't actually contrived by Minneapolis's Trashmen, they merely brutalised two Rivingtons' hits (*Papa-Oom-Mow-Mow* and *The Bird's The Word*) and by viciously assaulting both songs' essential elements with a surf guitar in a monoxide-filled garage, retarded rock's future. **IF**

Killer track: *Surfin' Bird*

LIVE/DEAD
GRATEFUL DEAD
Warner Bros.-Seven Arts, Inc., 1969

77

The first live rock album to use 16-track recording, *Live/Dead* caught the band on a West Coast high. An important record given that it put Californian venues the Fillmore West and the Avalon Ballroom on the map, it also opened eyes with the acidic 23-minute *Dark Star*, the puzzling avant-garde *Feedback* and the *St. Stephen/The Elven* medley. The idealism of communal art ran through the tracks, making Jerry Garcia and co. sound like benevolent aliens for those who thought LSD stood for pounds, shillings and pence. **MB**

Killer track: *Turn On Your Love Light*

INCENSE AND PEPPERMINTS
STRAWBERRY ALARM CLOCK
Uni, 1967

76

Where psychedelia and sunshine pop collide, *Incense And Peppermints* perfectly captured the acid experience for those suburban hippies who had no intention of actually dropping acid. Its *Billboard* chart-topping, era-defining title track was augmented on the album with lashings of flute-laced psych-lite froth with titles such as *Rainy Day Mushroom Pillow*. Groovy as all hell, yes, but hardly the Velvet Underground. **IF**

Killer track: *Incense And Peppermints*

THE GILDED PALACE OF SIN
THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS
A&M, 1969

75

Former Byrds Chris Hillman and Gram Parsons, along with bassist Chris Etheridge and steel guitarist 'Sneaky' Pete Kleinow, essentially laid the template for country rock on this West Coast classic. Nobody bought the record at the time, proving that the wider world wasn't yet ready for such a daring amalgam of honky-tonk, gospel and longhair rock'n'roll. **RH**

Killer track: *Hot Burrito #2*

IF YOU CAN BELIEVE YOUR EYES AND EARS
THE MAMAS & THE PAPAS
Dunhill, 1966

74

While *If You Can Believe Your Eyes And Ears* was one of the most perfect examples of sophisticated close-harmony popular music ever recorded, its unfortunate cover not only featured two surplus apostrophes in the band's name, but also a toilet. Yet nothing could detract from the exquisitely orchestrated Wrecking Crew brilliance of hit single *Monday, Monday*. **IF**

Killer track: *California Dreamin'*

LEADER OF THE PACK
THE SHANGRI-LAS
Red Bird, 1965

73

George 'Shadow' Morton's massively melodramatic Manhattan productions were perfectly suited to the angst-laden tones of 15-year old singer Mary Weiss, and while Motown's girl groups were all famously sent to charm school, these

prototype New York Dolls were street-wise chicks with whom one wouldn't mess. And their songs? Usually somebody died – graphically, tragically and young. **IF**

Killer track: *Remember (Walking In The Sand)*

UNDEAD

TEN YEARS AFTER

Deram, 1968

Before their attention-grabbing appearance at the Woodstock festival and a succession of US arena tours calcified their sound, Ten Years After were a nifty blues band speckled with jazz influences and a sense of swing. Recorded at West Hampstead's Klooks Kleek, *Undead* catches the intimacy of a club gig and Alvin Lee's rapid-fire guitar playing before it became clichéd. Lee reckoned this was as good as they got. **HF**

Killer track: *Woodchopper's Ball*

THE 5000 SPIRITS OR THE LAYERS OF THE ONION

THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND

Elektra, 1967

The title offers a glimpse of the dottiness of the music within. Robin Williamson and Mike Heron, two Scottish folkies, went to Morocco and imbibed the local culture. They fused the music they found there with their own to create a whimsical acoustic psychedelic mash-up. It was the perfect soundtrack for hippies reading *Alice In Wonderland* while on acid. **HF**

Killer track: *The Hedgehog's Song*

THE THOUGHTS OF EMERLIST DAVJACK

THE NICE

(Immediate, 1967)

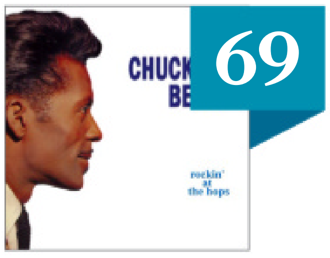
If The Moody Blues were the distinguished gentlemen of the proto-prog era, then The Nice were their demented evil twins. Their debut album was a schizoid amalgam of European classical grandeur and American rock'n'roll nastiness that channelled the crazed spirits of Jerry Lee Lewis and Franz Liszt. The throaty *Bonnie 'K'* showed that The Nice (a four-pice soon to be a trio) could rock out with the best of them, but it was virtuoso keyboard lunatic Keith Emerson's swivel-eyed classical/jazz mash-up *Rondo* that proved they were cooking on another planet. **DE**

Killer track: *Rondo*

ROCKIN' AT THE HOPS

CHUCK BERRY

Chess, 1960



The big singles – *Let It Rock* and *Bye Bye Johnny* – played Chuck Berry's by-then familiar calling cards, all skedaddling guitar and teen-targeting wordplay. But *Rockin' At The Hops* was most fascinating for its less-fanfared moments: take *Worried Life Blues* or *Confessin' The Blues*, both gorgeous, lolloping lilts, with the speed taken down a lick and Berry at his soulful best. **HY**

Killer track: *Worried Life Blues*

Santana: an uplifting and infectious blend of Afro/Latin rhythms.

GETTY

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

FAMILY

Reprise, 1969

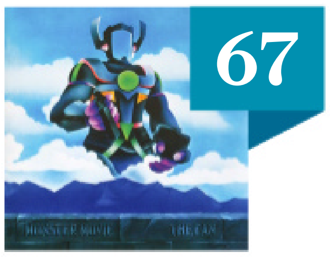
After their self-indulgent prog/psych debut album *Music In A Doll's House*, Family wised up for follow-up *Family Entertainment*, putting the emphasis on songs and keeping the production focused. Distinguished by singer Roger Chapman's quivering vibrato and a clearer direction, they seemed primed to make the breakthrough. But even as the album was released they were undermined by line-up changes that set them back on their heels. **HF**

Killer track: *The Weaver's Answer*

MONSTER MOVIE

CAN

Liberty, 1969



Celebrated for their 70s LPs *Tago Mago* and *Ege Bamyasi*, German collective Can laid the groundwork with this often overlooked debut (actually the second album they recorded, the first having been deemed to be too inaccessible for a release). Soon-to-be-replaced American singer Malcolm Mooney yelped over a set of intuitive pieces that prized repetition and groove over anything remotely conventional, using elements of tribal funk, psychedelia and experimental rock. The 20-minute *Yoo Doo Right* was originally a six-hour jam. **RH**

Killer track: *Yoo Doo Right*

SANTANA

SANTANA

CBS, 1969

An uplifting and infectious blend of Afro/Latin rhythms, rattling percussion, crying-to-the-sky guitar and swirling Hammond, ranging from dance-demanding, full-on pulsating thumpers such as *Jingo* and *Soul Sacrifice* to sweet spot-hitting samba moments like the sun-drenched hit *Evil Ways*. Debut albums don't come much better than this classic from the band who as unknowns lit up the Woodstock festival and stole the show. **PH**

Killer track: *Soul Sacrifice*

Johnny Winter: red-raw, sonically arse-rough and untamed by industry expectations.

SUMMER DAYS (AND SUMMER NIGHTS!!)

THE BEACH BOYS

Capitol, 1965

65

Their previous album *Today!* had ploughed similar ground to the not-yet-made *Pet Sounds*. Capitol, however, wanted more teenage anthems. The Boys obliged with a virtual tour round the American dream, abetted by a cast of specialists *à la* Phil Spector. It divided opinion (too commercial, said some) but nobody argued with *Help Me, Rhonda* or *Let Him Run Wild*. **MB**

Killer track: *California Girls*

MOSE ALIVE!

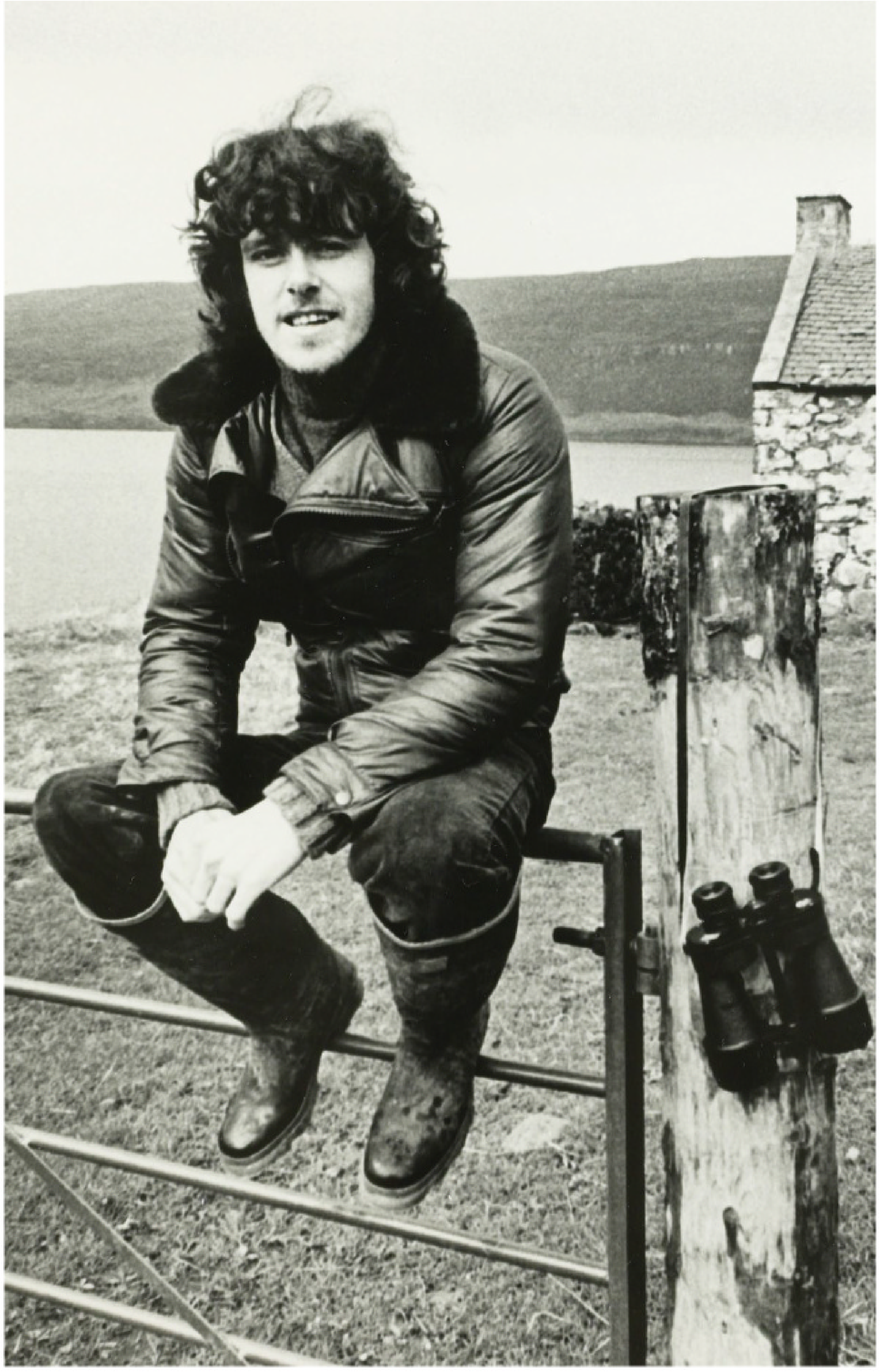
MOSE ALLISON

Atlantic, 1966

64

At first listen these suave, jazzy, piano-led blues tracks played by a cardigan-clad white guy seemed to belong to an earlier decade. Then it dawns on you that John Mayall and Van Morrison had based their frenzied covers of *Parchman Farm* and *Baby, Please Don't Go* respectively on Allison's earlier studio versions. And that Georgie Fame had nicked Allison's entire style for himself. **HF**

Killer track: *Seventh Son*



Donovan: turned into a fully-fledged psychedelic jazz-rocker with *Barabajagal*.

THE FIVE FACES OF MANFRED MANN

MANFRED MANN

HMV, 1964

63

While their peers were busy stomping their way through the same tried and trusted R&B covers, Manfred Mann, who'd already demonstrated their pop credentials with *Doo Wah Diddy* and *Sha La La*, stuck to their jazzy roots for a superior selection of blues and jazz covers along with some self-written numbers that still sound classy today. **HF**

Killer track: *I'm Your Kingpin*

SPOOKY TWO

SPOOKY TOOTH

Island, 1969

62

If Spooky Tooth are referenced at all today, it's as the band who wrote *Better By You, Better Than Me* – a song that became the focus of a notorious suicide-by-subliminal-message lawsuit centred around Judas Priest's metallised 1978 cover. Their original version appeared on *Spooky Two*, an exultant slab of secular gospel masquerading as first-wave heavy rock. Songs such as *Feelin' Bad* and *Hangman Hang My Shell On A Tree* were electric hymnals sent soaring on updrafts of emotion, courtesy of frontmen Mike Harrison and ex-pat American Gary Wright. But what

GETTY

Spooky Tooth possessed in soul, they lacked in guile and ambition. Free, whose debut album was released the same month, had no such issues: that's how winners and losers are made. **DE**

Killer track: *Feelin' Bad*

THE PROGRESSIVE BLUES EXPERIMENT

JOHNNY WINTER

Sonobeat, 1968

61

Back in 1968, Texan bluesman Winter's power trio were a match for the outgoing Cream, and this debut caught them at their early best: red-raw, sonically arse-rough and untamed by industry expectations. At a glance, the tracklisting was predictable fare – Muddy Waters's *Rollin' And Tumblin'*, Howlin' Wolf's *Forty-Four*, Slim Harpo's *I Got Love If You Want It* – but the trio kicked in the teeth of those standards, their performances driven by Winter's brittle slide-guitar and untutored bellow.

Winter would go on to make bigger records, but arguably he never made a better one than this. **HY**

Killer track: *Rollin' And Tumblin'*

BARABAJAGAL

DONOVAN

Epic, 1969

60

Seven studio albums in – although unreleased in the UK because of a contractual dispute – the whimsical Scottish folkster Donovan Philips Leitch turned into a fully-fledged psychedelic jazz-rocker, backed by the Jeff Beck Group and a host of cool pop pals (Graham Nash, Mike McGear, Lesley Duncan).

Barabajagal brimmed with great songs from multiple musical directions. These ranged from the funky shuffle of the *I Am The Walrus*-referencing title track to the processional *Atlantis*. Political commentary arose in the sweet anti-Vietnam song *To Susan On The West Coast Waiting*, and *Superlungs (My Supergirl)* would be adopted by Terry Reid, Led Zeppelin's nearly-man. **JK**

Killer track: *Barabajagal*

ALAMY

Q&A

LUTHER GROSVENOR *from* SPOOKY TOOTH

The guitarist with the short-lived (but brilliant) British rockers on the success that somehow eluded them, *that* Judas Priest cover, and the criminally overlooked album that they "never topped".

Is it fair to say that Spooky Tooth were one of the great underrated bands of the late 60s?
Yeah, I think it is. We were a great band, especially around the time of *Spooky Two*. We had already put out two records [1967's *Supernatural Fairytales*, which was released under the name Art, and Spooky Tooth's 1968 debut album *It's All About*]. But we never had the same success as a band like Free or Led Zeppelin. Why? I wish I could answer that question.

Most bands had one great singer. In Mike Harrison and Gary Wright, Spooky Tooth had two.
Well, getting in Gary was [Island Records boss] Chris Blackwell's suggestion. It was before we changed our name from Art. We weren't really going anywhere, and he said: "I've seen this American guy playing in Sweden, and he'd be perfect for you." We were like: "We're not having a fucking Yank in the band." But he came over and started rehearsing, and we all looked at each other and went: "Wow, this is fucking amazing." Gary ended up being the main songwriter.

What do you remember about recording the Spooky Two album?
We were very organised. We'd rehearsed enough so it was just right. And we were working with [producer] Jimmy Miller, who was a stickler for drawing things out. But I do remember that we did the track *Evil Woman* in one take. It was quite nerve-racking, because it's about nine minutes long. Today, you can play a bum note and fix it within seconds. But it was a different story back then. What you hear is exactly what was. You can't keep doing a nine-minute song over and over. I think the version on the album was probably the first take.

Joe Cocker and Steve Winwood both appear on the album. How did that come about?
They had the same management. We used to bump into those guys all the time. Everybody used to pop in the recording studio, see everybody else. Joe's on the song *Feelin' Bad*, on the chorus lines. We just said: "Come on in, have a go at singing this." He was amazing.

What do you think of Judas Priest's cover of the album's most famous song, Better By You, Better Than Me?
Never heard it. I know they had a court case in America over it, something to do with a guy who committed suicide. But I've never been bothered to listen to it. There are a couple of versions of *Evil Woman* out there as well. Never heard them either.

Your next album, 1969's Ceremony, was a collaboration with experimental electronic composer Pierre Henry. Did that record damage your career?
It didn't do us a lot of good. Chris Blackwell said: "There's this famous guy over in France who wants to do an album with you." So we sent over the backing tracks, then got it back and went: "Fucking hell. What's gone on here?" But I listened to it the other week, and there's some interesting things going on. But we never topped *Spooky Two*. From track one to the end it's a complete album. **DE**

Little Girl Lost

Janis Joplin's transition from band member to solo diva (including her only solo album released in her lifetime) was fraught with power plays, ego trips and excessive drug use.

Words: **Bill DeMain**

59 I GOT DEM OL' KOZMIC BLUES AGAIN MAMA!

JANIS JOPLIN

Columbia, 1969

In October 1968, Janis Joplin had a No.1 album, a Top 10 single and a string of sold-out tour dates. One critic raved about her "urgent, blazing white blues" voice. Another said she sounded like "she was calling out from the second-story window of a bordello, inviting you up". In her first blush of superstardom, the 25-year-old singer of Big Brother & The Holding Company should've been riding high. But she was miserable.

Weeks into her group's tour, supporting their second record *Cheap Thrills*, with the hit *Piece Of My Heart* blasting out of radios everywhere, Janis was bored with the increasingly formulaic approach to their live shows. She felt her bandmates were getting lazy. They were all downing different drink and drug cocktails of choice – speed, Seconal, Southern Comfort – which made them edgy with each other offstage. Midway through a European tour, Janis announced that she would leave Big Brother once their dates were fulfilled.

Her restlessness dovetailed with her ambition. The rapturous reception she was getting in the UK and Germany that autumn fed her dreams of international stardom. And whispering encouragement in her ear from the sidelines was manager Albert Grossman, who'd come up through the New York City folk scene, managing Bob Dylan and Peter, Paul & Mary. Once described by a musician as a "pudgy barracuda", Grossman promised Janis he would land her a deal for two million dollars – if she agreed to go solo. At the same time, Columbia Records president Clive Davis was wooing Janis with visions of her as a blend of Aretha and Streisand. He wanted brass, strings, Vegas, TV specials, the works. Flattered with the attention, Janis saw it all as a way out of her stagnant situation, and began assembling a new group of musicians.

Once the Columbia deal was inked, Davis was anxious to get her in the studio. Recording began on June 16, 1969 in Columbia Records Studio in New York. Grossman chose Gabriel Mekler to produce. Best-known for helming Steppenwolf biker-themed hits *Born To Be Wild* and *Magic Carpet Ride*, the classically-trained Mekler was opinionated and strong-willed. He didn't like Janis's choice of musicians for her band. They fought back and forth to a compromise, but Mekler sulked through the sessions and would ignore the suggestions of the players he didn't choose.

Davis's haste to get her solo debut out in time to capitalise on the success of *Cheap Thrills* also meant the new band didn't have enough time to gel as a unit. While the large cast nodded to the way records were made at Stax and Motown, the flip side was that the band never transcended the feeling of being hired hands. Once again, drugs and egos reared their ugly heads. And 1969 was the year of heroin. Guitarist Sam Andrew, a holdover from Big Brother, said, "Too many of the musicians were buying balloons [of heroin] rather than concentrating on the music." Saxophonist Snooky Flowers added: "We were musicians and we knew how to play. We weren't just a bunch of hippies running around playing three chords." He thought Janis was intimidated because she realized the band was "musically beyond her". In this chaos, Janis got a bit lost on her own album, personally and musically. Her father Seth later said: "The brass in the group didn't suit her. Her voice was an orchestra in itself."

And yet, testament to her otherworldly talent, there are sublime moments on *Dem Kozmic Blues*. The best of them have spare arrangements that bring her vocals to the forefront. There's *Maybe*, a creative reimagining of an old girl group hit, and *One Good Man*, where she spars with Michael Bloomfield's lean, fiery guitar licks, making the track sound like a blueprint for the first two Led Zeppelin albums. But the standout is a cover of Rodgers & Hart's *Little Girl Blue*, from the 1935 Broadway show *Jumbo*. Though she tweaks Lorenz Hart's lyrics, there is a deep empathy in the track. Hart, like Janis, was an outsider, uncomfortable in his own skin, perpetually insecure, given to jags of depression and drinking. Though she may not have known that, Janis found a cross-generational kindred spirit and it brought out all the colours in her voice. No other performance better illustrates her extraordinary openheartedness, empathy, and ability to cry for herself while crying for us as listeners.

Released in September 1969, the album went gold, but yielded no Top 10 singles and a mixed reaction from the press. A typical review, in *Rolling Stone*, raved about Janis's singing but faulted the accompaniment as "lumpier than a beer hall accordion band". She hit the road with many of the same musicians and had uneven gigs. "They didn't get me off," she said. "I have to have the umph. I've got to feel it, because if it's not getting through to me, the audience sure as hell aren't going to feel it either."

By summer 1970, she'd hired a new band, The Full Tilt Boogie, that she called "so heavy you can lean on it". But before her creative evolution could continue, Janis was gone. A year after her death at 27, Columbia released *Pearl*, the last piece of a puzzle that will remain forever unfinished.

Killer track: *Little Girl Blue*

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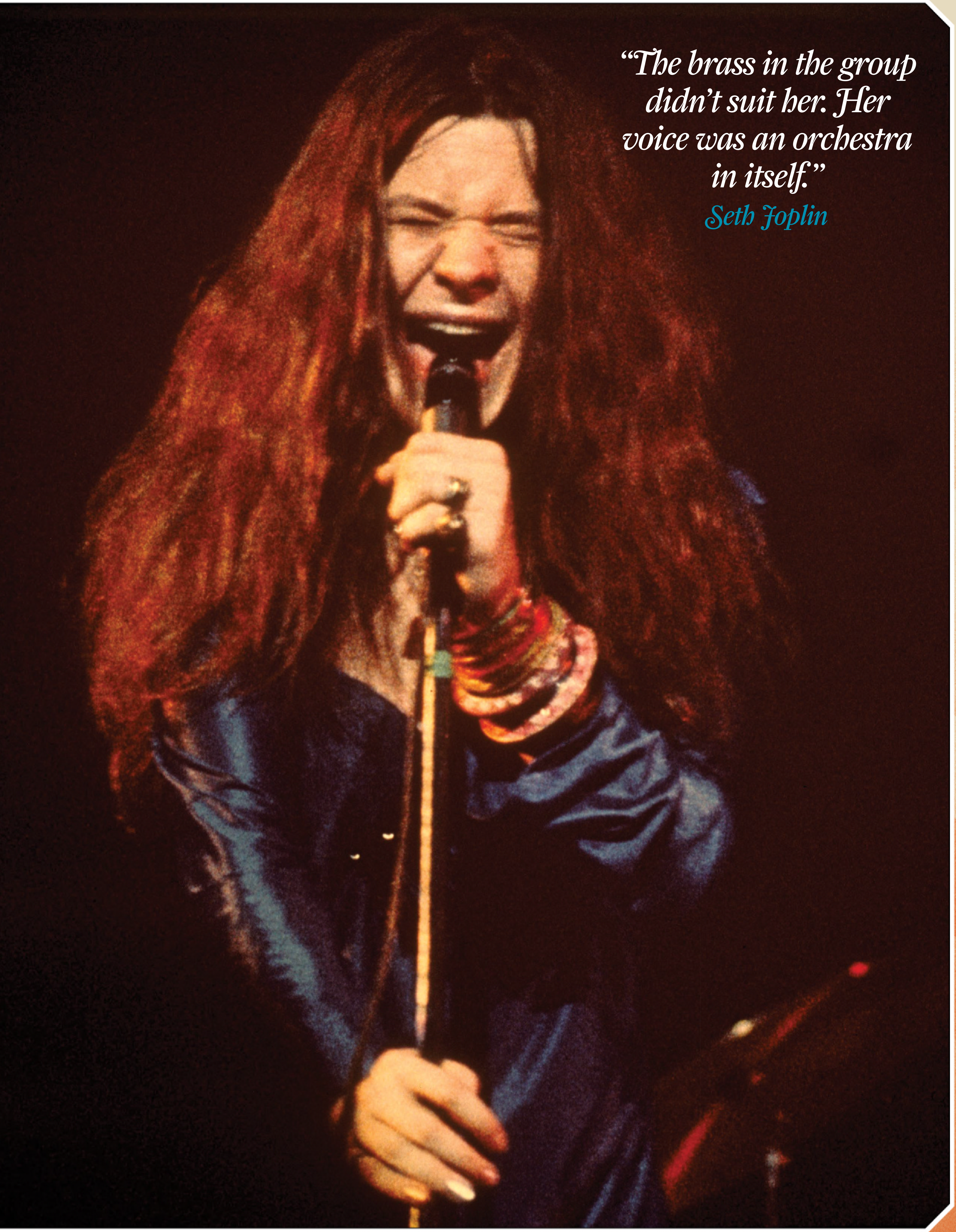


"The brass in the group didn't suit her. Her voice was an orchestra in itself."

Seth Joplin

EVOLUTION
THE HOLLIES
Parlophone, 1967

58

Pigeonholed early on as a singles band (and they did have plenty of hits), The Hollies seldom got the chance to extend themselves on an album until *Evolution*, when they came up with a dozen group-written songs that gave their trademark vocal harmonies and hooks a vivid Technicolor glow – flagged up with a psychedelic album cover by Dutch hippie design collective The Fool. Graham Nash was mainly responsible for this enlightened direction, demonstrating many of the tricks he would take to Crosby and Stills when he quit The Hollies a year later to join them, but Tony Hicks also relished the opportunity to add some feisty guitar. **HF**

Killer track: *Then The Heartaches Begin*

BLIND FAITH
BLIND FAITH
Polydor, 1969

57

The only album by the supergroup comprised of Eric Clapton, Ginger Baker, Ric Grech and Steve Winwood, *Blind Faith* (a UK and US *Billboard* No.1) successfully fused the often wonderfully bombastic blues rock of Baker and Clapton's former group Cream and the more soulful rock of Winwood's Traffic into a hybrid that at its best was scintillating. All that was lacking to make it a great album was a couple more killer tracks – and perhaps a different sleeve. **PH**

Killer track: *Had To Cry Today*

DA CAPO
LOVE
Elektra, 1966

56

Far more baroque than the band's debut album, the same year's follow-up *Da Capo* featured harpsichord, horns and percussion, but retained Love's breakneck punk ferocity on *7 And 7 Is* (their biggest hit). Main man Arthur Lee's split personality dripped through *She Comes In Colors* and the bad-trip Latin psych of *¡Que Vida!*, while Bryan MacLean's *Orange Skies* tripped by like dreamy MOR. The first side's eerie pop songs were immaculate. Side two's near-19-minute *Revelation*, by contrast, was a gloriously contrary misjudgement.

Since the band barely toured, Love remained largely unsung. The prickliest of the hippie bands. **MB**

Killer track: *The Castle*

Love: harpsichord, horns and percussion.

The Animals: *Animal Tracks* showcased the band's rapidly growing maturity.

SCOTT 4
SCOTT WALKER
Fontana, 1969

55

Scott Walker was pop's original rebel angel. Recoiling from the success of his former band, chart pin-ups the Walker Brothers, the American-born singer embarked on a solo career that saw him release four remarkable albums in just two years, each

GETTY X2

discarding another layer of his old life and revealing the increasingly enigmatic presence beneath.

This, the fourth of those albums, was the final stage in his transformation from chamber-pop idol to Camus-quoting troubadour-poet. *Scott 4* was existential lounge music, hitching subtle orchestration to songs inspired by Ingmar Bergman movies (*The Seventh Seal*) and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (*The Old Man's Back Again*). The album was a commercial flop, but it would lay the seeds for Walker's latter-day resurrection as an avant-garde luminary. **DE**

Killer track: *The Old Man's Back Again*

JACK ORION

BERT JANSCH

Transatlantic, 1966

54

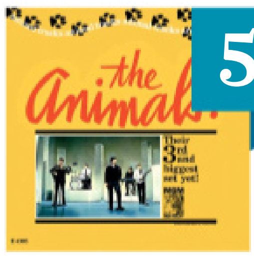
Just a covers album? Hardly: Bert Jansch's masterful third release dragged a batch of folk standards into the modern age, fusing his impeccable guitar technique with a bristling attitude that underlined his observation that "I didn't conform to anything – there were no rules". Trilling opener *The Waggoner's Lad* and a gliding rendition of *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face* were bewitching, while future rock gods including Jimmy Page were undoubtedly listening hard to Jansch's tumbling acoustic finger-style playing on *Black Water Side* (indeed Page was later accused of appropriating Jansch's arrangement of *Blackwaterside* for *Black Mountain Side* on Zeppelin's first album). **HY**

Killer track: *Blackwaterside*

ANIMAL TRACKS

THE ANIMALS

Columbia, 1965



53

Released barely six months after their rough-and-ready self-titled debut album, *Animal Tracks* showcased the band's rapidly growing maturity with more considered versions of R&B staples such as *I Ain't Got You* and *Bright Lights, Big City* sitting alongside the band's new-found love for Ray Charles. Unfortunately the album's thoughtful tone was in contrast to the excitement they were whipping up on singles like *We Gotta Get Out Of This Place* and *It's My Life*, which left casual listeners confused. Organist Alan Price's abrupt departure just as the album was released didn't help either. **HF**

Killer track: *I Believe To My Soul*

GETTY X2

A man on the Moon, nukes on standby, sexual liberation, the Vietnam War…

Key events that helped define the 60s.

The Greensboro Four

On February 1, 1960, four black men in Greensboro, North Carolina sat down at Woolworth's all-white luncheon counter and demanded to be served. The second day, 20 more joined them. The third, 100 more. Joe McNeil, one of the original four, said, "Before long it was probably fifteen or twenty cities, and that's when we had our thing going."

Birth Control Pill

In May 1960, Enovid, the first birth-control pill for use as a contraceptive, was approved. Within five years, 6.5 million American women were on the pill. The Pope condemned it. Southern states fought it. But the Supreme Court ruled in its favour. An equaliser, a liberator, it empowered generations of women worldwide to make rational choices about their lives.

The Profumo Scandal

It could've been yesterday's headline. In July 1961, British Secretary of War John Profumo began an affair with a 19-year old dancer named Christine Keeler. She was also the lover of a Russian military attaché with underworld connections. Profumo lied about the affair, but soon resigned. The high-profile case set the precedent for decades of powerful men's public downfalls.

Dr King: inspiring a generation.

The Cuban Missile Crisis

For 13 days in October 1962, the world held its breath as Kennedy and Kruschev played a game of high-stakes chicken. After the US discovered that Russia had nuclear missiles in Cuba, tensions had accelerated quickly. Accusations, denials, a naval blockade, troops mobilised, alerts reached DEFCON 2. Finally, Kruschev backed down. It was the closest the world has ever come to nuclear war.

Radio Caroline

On March 27, 1964 the pirate radio station, on a ship anchored off Felixtowe, launched with the Rolling Stones single *Not Fade Away*. The brainchild of Ronan O'Rahilly, Caroline circumvented the BBC's lock on the airwaves. It helped break artists such as The Who and Georgie Fame, and made DJs Johnnie Walker and Robbie Dale into heroes. Before FM radio, Caroline forged the indie spirit.

Troops In Vietnam

In February 1965, the US deployed its first troops in South Vietnam, purportedly to prevent communism from spreading. President John F Kennedy's assassination was the moment that robbed the country of hope, and this start to a seemingly endless war gave birth to a deep cynicism about government that still lingers today.

Buzz Aldrin: the second man on the Moon, July 1969.

Rolling Stone Launches

Berkeley dropout Jann Wenner borrowed $7,500 from his parents, and with encouragement from legendary San Francisco jazz critic Ralph Gleason launched *Rolling Stone* magazine in November 1967. The first issue included Hendrix, Cream, Donovan and Haight-Ashbury. Wenner's mission to praise "the significance of rock and the wisdom of youth" was under way. And here we are, 50 years later.

Martin Luther King Assassinated

On April 4, 1968, the charismatic Civil Rights leader was shot by a sniper at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. Like the tragic killings of John F Kennedy and his brother Bobby, King's death was a blow not only to the Civil Rights movement but also to the optimism of America. In King's wake came the Black Power movement and the racial turbulence of the early 70s.

Computer Conference

In December 1968, 17 researchers from Stanford University in the USA presented a 90-minute live demonstration of new computer innovations to fellow professionals: the mouse, hypertext, dynamic file linking and network communication via electronic mail. What might have seemed like a conference for eggheads turned out to be the blueprint for modern life.

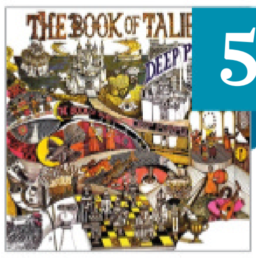
The First Man On The Moon

As a metaphorical escape from planet Earth's problems, what could be better than touching down on a new world? Apollo 11's Neil Armstrong's "One small step for man…", spoken on July 21, 1969, was one of the 20th century's great one liners. But the note of optimism was soon drowned out by Vietnam and Watergate. **BDM**

BOOK OF TALIESYN

DEEP PURPLE

Harvest, 1969



52

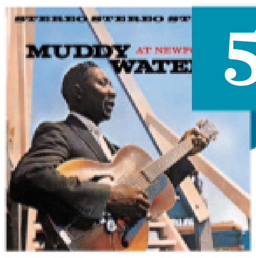
Sounding like it was recorded in a lift shaft with mod-prog troubadour Rod Evans shouting down a well, this kaleidoscopic *tour de force* came on the back of the band's US success with previous album *Shades Of Deep Purple* and their cover version of *Hush*. Looking back to the 14th century for inspiration, and mashing it up with a brilliantly frantic take on *We Can Work It Out*, a breathtaking *Kentucky Woman* and a monumental *River Deep, Mountain High*, their speed-fuelled Bach-meets-R&B dance band attack was in full flow. **JK**

Killer track: *Kentucky Woman*

AT NEWPORT 1960

MUDDY WATERS

MCA/Chess, 1960



51

Rebellion was in the air at the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival, with teenage rioters marauding through the site and Muddy Waters playing an amped-up Sunday set featuring fierce highlights like *(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man* that eclipsed the studio takes. Winning over the jazz crowd – and seized upon by the British-invaders-in-waiting – the 1960 Newport festival marked the moment when Muddy Waters and the blues crossed over. **HY**

Killer track: *(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man*

Buffalo Springfield: multiple moments of timeless majesty.

Deep Purple: a kaleidoscopic *tour de force*.

AGAIN

BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD

Atco, 1967

50

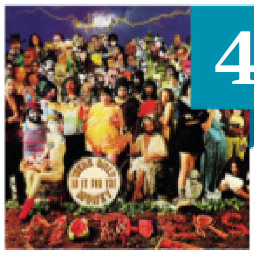
Despite being recorded during a nine-month period of flux by a slowly collapsing band (bassist Bruce Palmer deported for marijuana possession, Neil Young leaving and rejoining on a regular basis), Buffalo Springfield's second album featured multiple moments of timeless majesty. From the fluid genius of Stephen Stills's raga-guitar responses to Young's *Mr Soul* lead vocal to the Jack Nitzsche-orchestrated *Expecting To Fly* (which, incidentally, featured no band members other than Young) this is as opiated an ethereal experience one could reasonably expect to enjoy without actually resorting to heroin. **IF**

Killer track: *Expecting To Fly*

WE'RE ONLY IN IT FOR THE MONEY

MOTHERS OF INVENTION

Verve, 1968



49

Ironically, considering that it's often embraced as one of psychedelia's defining statements, Zappa's third Mothers Of Invention album was an exquisitely executed sideswipe at the burgeoning hippie movement, psychedelic rock in general and, specifically, The Beatles. Constructed with as much diligence and technical expertise as both *Sgt. Pepper* and *Pet Sounds*, *We're Only In It* was a future-presaging sound collage (surf/psych/musique concrète/doowop/Varese), as far from – and counter to – the insipid Summer of Love unfolding outside the studio as *Never Mind The Bollocks*. **IF**

Killer track: *Who Needs The Peace Corps?*

LIEGE AND LIEF

FAIRPORT CONVENTION

Island, 1969

48

With the band recovering after a catastrophic road accident that killed their drummer and guitarist/vocalist Richard Thompson's girlfriend, Fairport Convention deliberately looked for new inspiration, and found it in traditional folk music – to which they added a deft rock'n'roll kick, encouraged by their newly acquired folkie fiddle player Dave Swarbrick and tempered by the dulcet vocals of Sandy Denny. *Liege And Lief* single-handedly created a new musical genre. But scarcely had they begun to promote it than Denny quit to form the short-lived Fotheringay before embarking on a solo career, and Ashley Hutchings left to form Steeleye Span. **HF**

Killer track: *Matty Groves*

GETTY

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GETTY

HERE ARE THE SONICS

THE SONICS

Etiquette, 1965

47

When the Sonics recorded at a tiny Seattle studio, they insisted VU-meters stay red; alarming engineers but predicting garage rock and punk. With fuzzy block chords and Gerry Roslie's throat-shredding holler, 1964's debut single *The Witch* glowered like an upturned black finger at the polite beat boom, the album showing Roslie, sax-player Rob Lind, drummer Bob Bennett, guitarist Larry Parypa and bassist brother Andy rocking demonically on *Roll Over Beethoven* and *Do You Love Me*; outgunned by manic originals *Psycho* and *Strychnine*. Too much for their times, but *everything* started here. **KN**

Killer track: *The Witch*

SAFE AS MILK

CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & HIS MAGIC BAND

Buddah, 1967

46

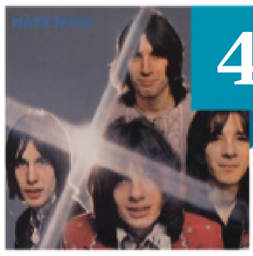
The initial demos for *Safe As Milk* were deemed "too negative" by the suits at A&M, who swiftly dropped Don Van Vliet from their roster. With a new band in tow (including a 20-year-old Ry Cooder), the good Captain found a welcoming home, for a time at least, at Buddah. Beefheart and co. sounded relatively commercial on psych-blues workouts like *Abba Zaba* and *Zig Zag Wanderer*, though the real keeper was the more outré *Electricity*, a more accessible precursor to deeply experimental works like *Trout Mask Replica*. **RH**

Killer track: *Electricity*

NAZZ

NAZZ

SGC, 1969



45

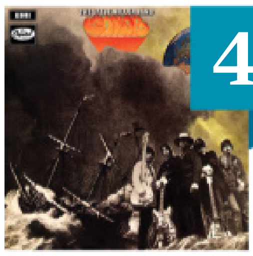
Philadelphia's Nazz, the first collective to benefit from frontman and songwriter Todd Rundgren's enduring genius, were originally intended to be a teenybop phenomenon to match The Monkees. But while their eponymous debut (heavy with musical sophistication and the early flowerings of a major talent) missed its mark commercially, it surpassed all expectations artistically. Lead single *Open My Eyes* kicked off proceedings with a riff strident enough to recall The Who, while *Hello It's Me* and *If That's The Way You Feel* boasted a more considered, distinctly adult resonance, ripe with potential. **IF**

Killer track: *Open My Eyes*

SAILOR

STEVE MILLER BAND

Capitol, 1968



44

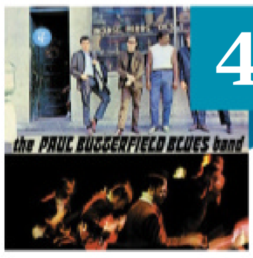
From the moody San Francisco Bay foghorn on *Song For Our Ancestors* (an obvious influence on Pink Floyd's *Echoes*) to the rocked-out R&B of Boz Scaggs' closing *Dime-a-Dance Romance*, *Sailor* embarked on an epic psych journey that charted a course beyond the competition. Miller's caustic *Living In The USA* turned the Chuck Berry notion of Uncle Sam on its head, while the salacious *Gangster Of Love* (originally by Johnny 'Guitar' Watson) was white blues personified. **MB**

Killer track: *Dear Mary*

THE PAUL BUTTERFIELD BLUES BAND

PAUL BUTTERFIELD

1965, Elektra



43

Deemed an 'important' record by critics, as a top quality example of an early blues album to feature a white singer, the debut from Paul Butterfield's band took itself

a little less seriously. The American vocalist/harpist lead a stellar band (including guitarists Mike Bloomfield and Elvin Bishop) through boisterous tracks like *Born In Chicago* with a blue-collar authenticity that could really only come from fighting your way up on that city's club circuit.

Over to you, Britain. **HY**

Killer track: *Born In Chicago*

IN THE COURT OF THE CRIMSON KING

KING CRIMSON

Island, 1969

42

What a debut. Astonishingly original, tremendously audacious, wonderfully conceived and stunningly executed. Mixing a potent brew of folk, jazz, rock and classical music, with tracks ranging from the fire-breathing apocalyptic riff and breathtaking instrumental acrobatics of *21st Century Schizoid Man*, to the Mellotrons-on-stun orchestration of the epic title track and the delicate minimalism of *Moonchild*, this prog cornerstone – and the first real prog album – is one of the greatest rock records ever made. It was brilliant and breathtaking back in '69, and it still is today. A truly groundbreaking, monumental opening statement. **PH**

Killer track: *21st Century Schizoid Man*

THE ANGRY YOUNG THEM

THEM

Decca, 1965

41

Assembled by 19-year-old dynamo vocalist Van Morrison (and named after a 50s horror film), Belfast's answer to the Rolling Stones soon made waves globally. *The Angry Young Them* mixed blues and R&B standards with a handful of Morrison originals for a thrilling, gritty dip into nervy white-boy blues and garage rock. The sleeve notes said: "Defiant! Angry! Sad! They are honest to the point of insult!" But their attitude wasn't everything; Morrison would be blowin' people's minds as a soulful solo artist two years later. **JK**

Killer track: *Gloria*

BOOGIE WITH CANNED HEAT

CANNED HEAT

Liberty, 1968

40

Few white bands played authentic blues like the Heat. Original invention was all over their second album, on which Al "Owl" Wilson and Henry Vestine's trippy guitars were grounded by Adolfo de la Parra and Larry Taylor, while force-of-nature singer Bob Hite completed the classic line-up. Jug band, bluesy folk and drawn-out boogie rang the changes, while guests included Dr. John (arrangement on *Marie Laveau*) and veteran Delta pianist Sunnyland Slim (*Turpentine Moan*). World-class drug abusers and hedonists, the Heat were unique. **MB**

Key track: *On The Road Again*

HOT RATS

FRANK ZAPPA

Bizarre/Reprise, 1969

39

Jazz dressed in rock clothing or rock masquerading as jazz, *Hot Rats* is a fantastic album whichever way you look at it; an eye-widening glimpse into the genius world of one of the most important musicians in 20th-century popular music. The spiky melodies and complex instrumental harmonies of the jazz-structured *It Must Be A Camel* could prove challenging for those whose staple is major chords and melodic elegance, but the funkified, sax-honking *The Gumbo Variations*, *Son Of Mr Green Genes* and the rockier *Willie The Pimp* are easier-on-the-ear, and upbeat opener *Peaches En Ragalia* is, well, an absolute peach. **PH**

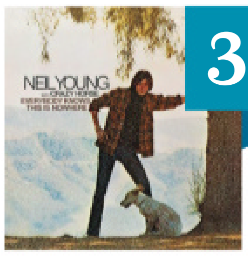
Killer track: *Peaches En Regalia*

Arthur Brown: revelling in melodrama.

EVERYBODY KNOWS THIS IS NOWHERE

NEIL YOUNG

Reprise, 1969



38

After an underwhelming solo debut earlier in 1969, Neil Young hit full stride after reuniting with some jamming buddies from his Buffalo Springfield days. The trio of Danny Whitten, Ralph Molina and Billy Talbot – renamed Crazy Horse – duly backed Young on a bunch of bruising songs that veered between terse economy (*Cinnamon Girl*) and loose spontaneity, best illustrated by the extended grooves of *Down By The River* and *Cowgirl In The Sand*. In doing so, Young hit upon both a fresh persona and a long-standing working relationship. **RH**

Killer track: *Down By The River*

THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN

THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN

Track, 1968

37

Arthur Brown's incendiary hit *Fire* was the centrepiece of an 18-minute suite that included the suitably dramatic *Fire Poem* and plenty of swirling gothic organ. That took care of side one, while side two featured covers like James Brown's *I've Got Money* and Screamin' Jay Hawkins's *I Put A Spell On You* that offered another chance for Brown to exercise his prodigious vocal range and rise above the somewhat muffled production. They revelled in the melodrama but never tipped into histrionics. **HF**

Killer track: *Fire*

REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Living The Fantasy

He was in Traffic at their 60s best, played on tracks by the Stones and George Harrison, had Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson guest on his records… Life has been quite a ride for **Dave Mason**.

Words: **Paul Rees**

36 MR. FANTASY
TRAFFIC
Island, 1967

Killer track: *Dear Mr. Fantasy*

Almost 51 years ago, Dave Mason was holed up with bandmates Steve Winwood, Jim Capaldi and Chris Wood at Olympic Studios in London. They were there recording their second album together as Traffic, the follow-up to their *Mr. Fantasy* debut of a year earlier on which they had crystallised the sound of Britain's psychedelic-hued Summer of Love. Guitarist Mason wrote that album's big hit, *Hole In My Shoe*, which the others had come to deride, and soon he left the group. He had returned after a restorative sojourn on a Greek island, and brought with him to the studio *Feelin' Alright*, which would become a hit and launch what would become the *Traffic* album. Mason's signature song, it was also covered by Joe Cocker and American rockers Three Dog Night, but by then Traffic's perennial odd man out had left the group again.

Today Mason is at his home on the Hawaiian island of Maui, where he is delighted to report that the mid-morning sun is out and the sky a denim shade of blue. He headed to the US following his second, enforced, exit from Traffic, initially settled in Los Angeles and has resided in the States ever since. That much explains the peculiarities of his accent, a collision of Californian drawl and the sing-song vowels of his native English Midlands. He's now seventy-two, but his easy laugh makes him sound decades younger, and he has packed a lot into his musical life.

Traffic began in the far-off spring of 1967, when Winwood jumped ship from the Spencer Davis Group – having made his name as a teenage prodigy-genius – and into a new, more expansive collaboration with three local musicians he had encountered over after-hours jam sessions at boho Birmingham club the Elbow Room. In short order, Traffic encouraged an exodus of English bands to 'get it together in the country' when the four-piece moved into a tumbledown cottage in rural Berkshire and jammed *Mr. Fantasy* into being. They went on to establish themselves as sonic adventurers and virtuosos, their sound ranging from folk, prog and blues to jazz flourishes and Middle Eastern drones. Mason returned briefly, for a third stint in Traffic in 1971. In between times, he introduced his friend Jimi Hendrix to Bob Dylan's *All Along the Watchtower* and played on the coruscating version on Hendrix's *Electric Ladyland* masterpiece, and guested on two more seminal albums of the period: the Rolling Stones' *Beggars Banquet* and George Harrison's sprawling post-Beatles bow *All Things Must Pass*.

At the Stones session, Mason met and befriended Gram Parsons, who subsequently courted him around the 70s LA rock elite. He toured with Delaney and Bonnie And Friends. Eric Clapton was among the other Friends, and afterwards invited Mason into Derek And The Dominos. A lone wolf, Mason stayed in that band for just one gig.

After that he threw himself into a solo career that has yielded 13 studio albums, which have variously featured contributions from Mama Cass, Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson and each of Crosby, Stills and Nash. In the 90s he did a couple of years of filling Lindsey Buckingham's shoes in Fleetwood Mac, before going back out under his own name once more. Today he tours regularly with Dave Mason Band, racking up around 100 gigs a year.

"Making records these days to me is just an exercise in futility," he says, his so-laid-back-its-horizontal speaking voice competing against the barking of his dog. "There's no music business left and no record sales, and so sadly I don't focus on that side of things any more."

Growing up in Worcester in the 1950s, what first turned you on to music?

I was in the school choir, but for me it was the same as everybody else back then: Bill Haley and *Rock Around The Clock*, Buddy Holly, and the rest. Then I went to America when I was eleven to visit my sister. She was living in San Diego, and there was just so much more music – so much more of everything. Growing up in England back then we had one TV station, black and white. From my early teens my dream had been to go into the RAF, but my maths skills weren't up to par. Music and all these bands were just starting to happen for me, so I decided I'd rather play guitar. It was a wing and a prayer.

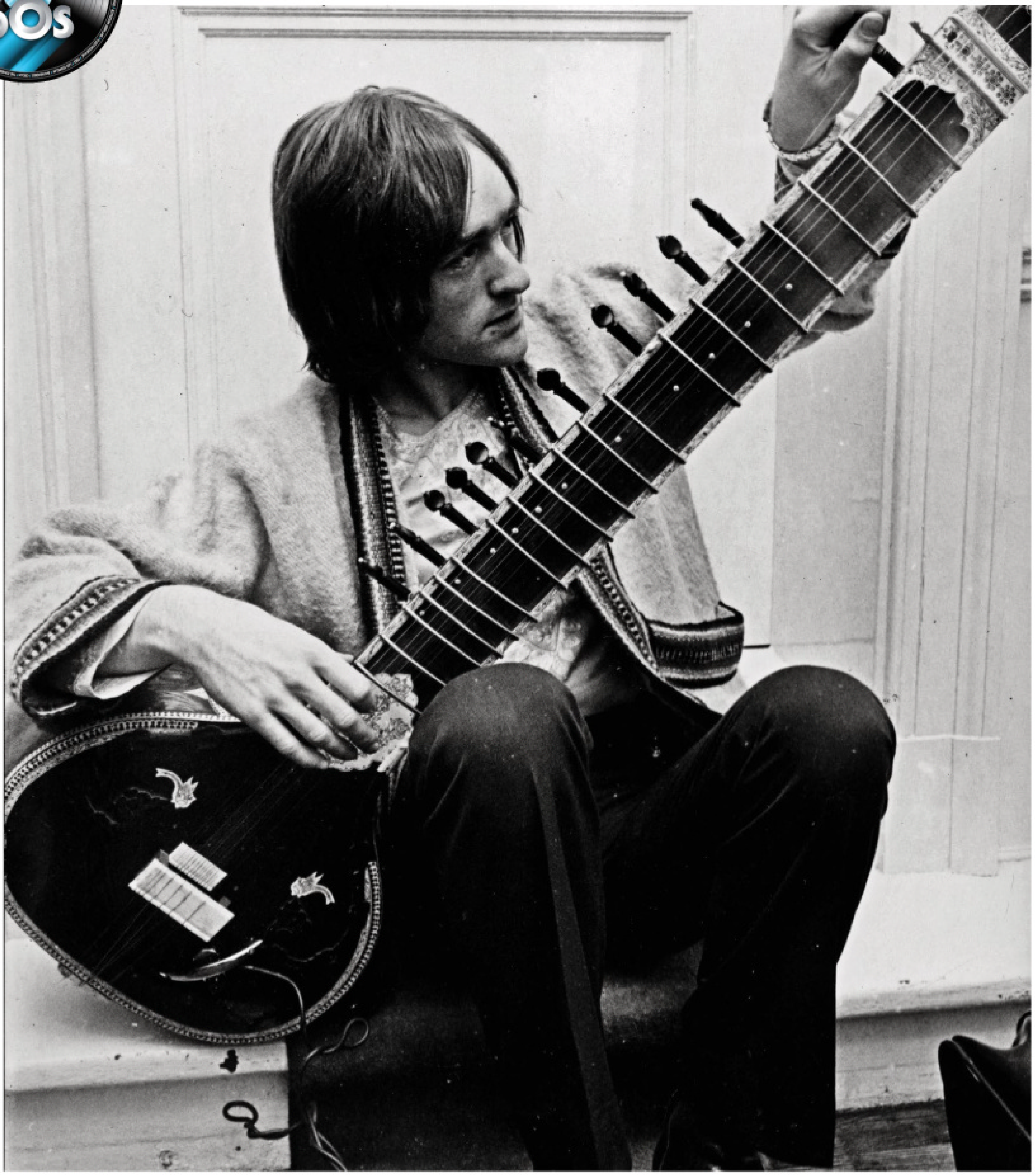
Jim Capaldi lived just down the road from me in Evesham. Robert Plant was twelve miles away and Mick Ralphs was nearby too. Jim used to have a band called The Sapphires. He was the lead singer and very much an Elvis impersonator. The pair of us put a couple of incarnations of bands together, The Hellions being one of them. We played school dances and the pubs and clubs up in Birmingham, that kind of nonsense. Obviously, we were fans of the Spencer Davis Group and this fifteen-year-old kid Winwood, but it was at the Elbow Room that we struck up a kind of musical admiration society. Chris Wood was an art student, and the four of us basically hung out, got high and listened to music. Eventually Steve got tired of being 'the young Ray Charles' with Spencer Davis, and that's how Traffic developed.

Was the reality of the four members of Traffic living together at the cottage as idyllic as it sounds?

Yeah, it was great. We just wanted to isolate ourselves and figure ▷

REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

"Traffic was one of the original alternative bands."
Dave Mason



Mason with the tricky task of tuning a sitar.

ALAMY

“It was just the lifestyle. You don’t know you’re making history when you’re doing it.” Dave Mason

things out, because we really didn’t know what the hell we were going to do with Traffic. Traffic was probably one of the original alternative bands. God knows, we were a jam band before that phrase even got coined. I was the one who went: “Let’s start writing and see what we can come up with.” I had never written songs before. I was brought up in an upper-middle-class English family and had zero street smarts. Most of my early attempts, I look back and they’re a little trite and very naïve. But the weird thing was, the first song I ever wrote was *Hole In My Shoe*, and that became Traffic’s biggest hit. Therein also lay the seeds of the break-up of the band.

Were you aware at the time quite how much the other three reviled that song?
That didn’t become apparent until after the second Traffic album. We were just trying anything and everything on that first album, it was the era of us all experimenting. Everything seemed possible at that age ,and we made it that way with how it was that we lived. I left after that first album not because of any aggravation at all with the band, I couldn’t deal with our success. The way people’s attitudes toward me changed was not normal for me.

Returning to the band with *Feelin’ Alright* must nevertheless have felt to you like a validation?
Again, with the second album all my stuff was picked out as singles, and that became the straw that broke the camel’s back. Steve later gave a quote that I was nothing more in the band than an uninvited guest. See, I always looked at Traffic as it being our differences that together made us great, but it just wasn’t going to go that way. The three of them made it pretty clear that I didn’t fit any more in a band that I had started. Jim and I even came up with the name. It’s just very odd to me that someone with that much talent should take that stance.

I’ve written a few things, and I’m not necessarily the best interpreter of them. *Feelin’ Alright* has never stopped, but it’s because Joe Cocker did it. When I heard Cocker’s version of that song I was like, “Oh, yeah!”

Where did you first meet Hendrix?
I met him one night in a club in London, Blazes. He was sitting by himself, so I just went and sat down and started talking to him. He was a fan of Traffic’s, and of course I was a huge fan of his. As many incredibly good guitar players as there are today, there are no more Jimi Hendrixs. He was something utterly unique, and like in any business I wanted to be around the best to learn from them. The two of us hung out quite a bit. At one point I was going to take Noel Redding’s place in the Experience, because there was a rift happening in the band.

You’re credited with playing the shehnai, an Indian oboe, on the Stones track *Street Fighting Man*. How did that come about?
That kind of stuff happened a lot back then. There were only so many studios, and everybody would be in London at some point, so you were bound to run into people. Chris Blackwell [Island Records head] had brought Jimmy Miller over from the States to produce Traffic, and Jimmy also ended up recording the Stones. Brian Jones I had also got to know. I just happened to be there at the session, and it was like: “Do you want to sit in and blow on this and bang some drums?” “Sure, why not.” It was just the lifestyle. You don’t know you’re making history when you’re doing it.

Next thing, you were living in LA.
When it was obvious that Traffic was a dead deal for me I just thought to hell with it, I’m going. Also, income tax was nineteen shillings in the pound [95 per cent]. It was insane. You could make more money on the dole than working. Screw that, I was heading west, young man. I took a bag of clothes and a guitar and left. There were still hippies on Sunset Boulevard when I got over there.

I had no idea what was going to happen, but I met up with Delaney And Bonnie’s management, and through them got signed to Blue Thumb Records. I cut my first solo album, *Alone Together*, with a lot of the Tulsa musicians from Delaney And Bonnie’s band. That was a great fucking band. That record also had Leon Russell and Rita Coolidge on it. At the same time, Clapton and Steve put Blind

Faith together, and Delaney And Bonnie became the opening act on most of their American tour and I was the guitar player in that band. That's how Eric got to find most of the people who went with him into Derek And The Dominos.

You were in Derek And The Dominos for just the one gig, at London's Lyceum theatre, and then left. Why?
The problem for me was that Jim Gordon was the drummer in that band. He's the guy who got Eric into heroin. Eric had just started on that path. We were all staying at Eric's house, and there were a lot of days when nothing would get done. I eventually said: "You know what? This is great, guys, but I'm going back to the States." As it happened, it turned out for the better for everybody. They went on with Duane Allman and cut *Layla*, which is a great album.

And you played on George Harrison's album *All Things Must Pass*.
I kind of knew George. I had gone along to some of the *Sgt. Pepper's* sessions and hung out with both Paul and George at different times. At George's session I was one of a number of musicians, and if you asked me now what songs I played on I couldn't tell you. I played acoustic guitar on two or three things, but I don't know which ones.

What made you decide to go back to Traffic in 1971, and why did that reunion last only for six shows?
I went in thinking it would be the beginning of something and maybe that everybody had calmed down. There were a couple of other players in the band – Ric Grech on bass and Jim Gordon again – but nothing had really changed. The gigs seemed to have gone fine, but it was obvious that it wasn't going anywhere. Or at least that's how it was represented to me.

"Highlights? Sitting across from Hendrix, facing him with my acoustic guitar, and laying down the track for All Along The Watchtower. That would rate up there."

Dave Mason

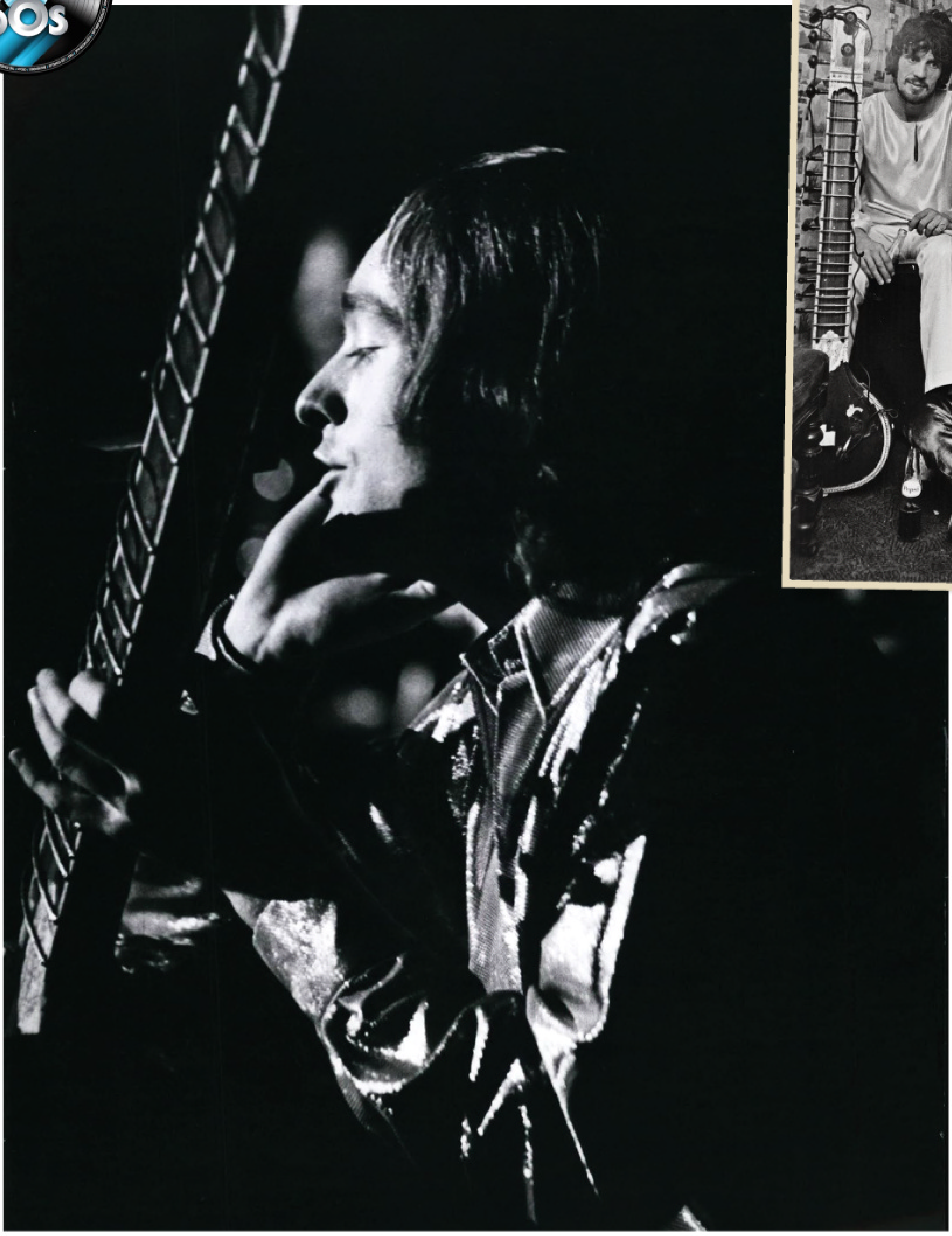
Above: Mason with the Jimi Hendrix Experience. Below: Traffic appearing on a TV show.

Back in LA, you made an album with Mama Cass.
That was an odd collaboration, let's put it that way. It happened because when Gram Parsons introduced me around LA, he took me up to Cass's house. It turned out that a couple of my best friends from London were also living there, so I spent most of that summer of 1969 at Cass's. People would drop by like crazy. By the time I came to make that album in 1971 The Mamas And The Papas were not happening, and Cass and I had been hanging out for so long we decided to try recording something together. Cass could have been another Sophie Tucker, she had a wicked sense of humour. But they never developed her that way in The Mamas And The Papas. She got cast as the big girl with the pretty voice, and she was so much more than that.

GETTY x2

Cass, Parsons, Hendrix and Brian Jones – they had all died by 1974. How did that affect the way in which you viewed the business you were in and the lifestyle you were living?
Ah, I don't think I ever thought much differently to the way I always had, to be honest. To lose that talent so young was obviously a great loss, but we're all going to go at some point. That's all part of us being here, and you just have to take life as it rolls and move on.

Let's talk about some of the other people you had on your own albums. Each of Crosby, Stills and Nash independently popped up on your seventies records.
I knew Graham Nash. He and I had tried to do some writing back in England when he was still with The Hollies. When ▷



Traffic in the 60s: (l-r) Jim Capaldi, Steve Winwood, Dave Mason, Chris Wood.

I moved over to LA, Graham was getting it together with Stephen and David. I was around the whole time that was going on. The three of them rented the house of Peter Tork from The Monkees, way up on the top of Mullholland Drive. They were all living there, kind of doing what Traffic had with the cottage. There was some loose talk of me coming on board with that at the beginning. Stephen and I also tried out a couple of things, but that didn't pan out either.

How did Stevie Wonder come to play harmonica on *The Lonely One* on your 1973 album *It's Like You Never Left*?
The two guys who were producing Stevie's *Innervisions* album at the time were Bob Margouleff and Malcolm Cecil, and Malcolm was also working on my record. My sessions would sometimes follow on from Stevie's, so I'd go down to the studio early to watch him work. One day I just asked if he would be up for playing on my track, and he was like: "Sure, absolutely." He nailed it in two takes. The guy is amazing, a true genius.

> *"I always looked at Traffic as it being our differences that together made us great, but it just wasn't going to go that way."* Dave Mason

And your duet with Michael Jackson, *Save Me*, on your 1980 album *Old Crest On A New Wave*?
Same deal. We were working in the same studio. I was in one room, Michael was in the other. He was on a break one day, and I had a song that I needed someone to sing a high part on. So I walked over to his room, introduced myself and asked him. He was actually stood in the doorway. He looked at me for a minute and then said: "You know, when I was twelve-years-old I did this TV special with Diana Ross, and at the end of the show we both sang this song together called *Feelin' Alright*. So yes, I will come and sing on your song." All I wanted was for him to sing the one part, but he just went off and sang the whole track. He was dancing away behind the microphone.

Did anybody you asked to appear on a record ever say no to you?
Traffic. Ha!

How many fond memories do you have of the time you were in Fleetwood Mac?
The Fleetwood Mac cover band you mean? Mick Fleetwood I knew, and it was an interesting experience, but also very convoluted because there were three different managers, so it took forever to get anything done. We did that album [1995's *Time*] that nobody even knows about, and Warner Brothers certainly didn't promote; there were a couple of tours of Europe and the US and that was the end of that. It wasn't one of the most productive times. Nowadays Mick is a neighbour on Maui and we've gotten to be very tight. I like him a lot.

Looking back over the whole span of your life's work and many amazing experiences, could you possibly pick out a single highlight?
Good God, that's hard, because there have been so many. I suppose if I have to choose one moment it would be sitting across from Hendrix, facing him with my acoustic guitar, Mitch Mitchell next to us, and laying down the track for *All Along The Watchtower*. That would rate up there. ❶

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PHOTO CREDIT: BACKSTAGE FLASH
Samantha Fish
MAY 2019
07 GATESHEAD SAGE 2
08 MILTON KEYNES STABLES
09 EDINBURGH VOODOO ROOMS
10 GLASGOW ORAN MOR
11 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY2
12 BRISTOL THEKLA
13 CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION 2
14 MANCHESTER BAND ON THE WALL
16 LONDON THE GARAGE
17 BRIGHTON HAUNT
18 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY2
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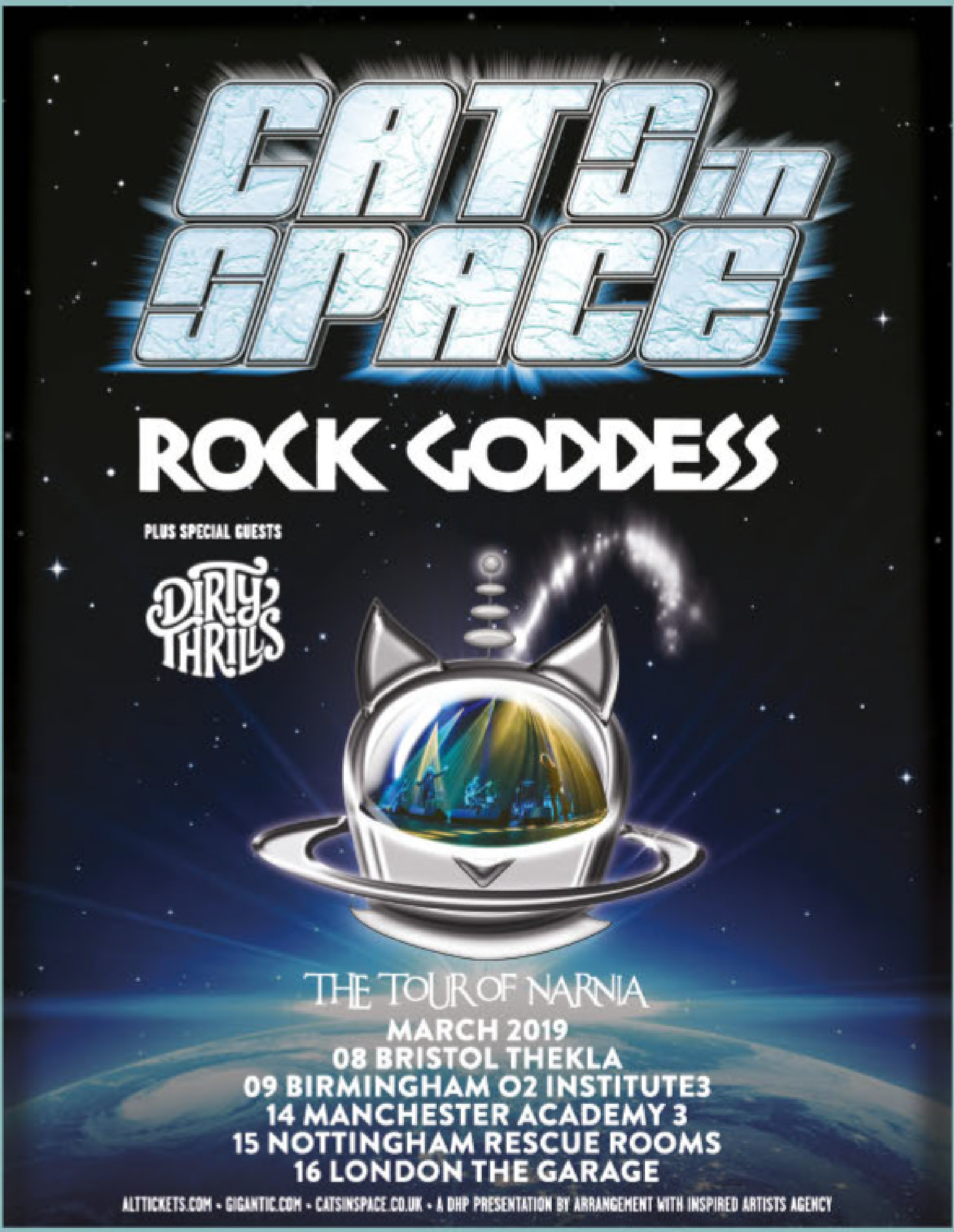
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09 BIRMINGHAM O2 INSTITUTE3
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14 LEEDS BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB
21 BRISTOL THEKLA
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26 BRIGHTON THE HAUNT
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THE SECOND ALBUM

THE SPENCER DAVIS GROUP

Fontana, 1966

35

In 1966 there was no shortage of white British kids trying desperately to sound like black American bluesmen. But only the 17-year-old Stevie Winwood had the talent to sound like both simultaneously. Singing and pounding the ivories in front of the no-fuss grooves of the Spencer Davis Group, Winwood's prodigious spark burned brightest on standout tracks like *Let Me Down Easy* and the evergreen *Keep On Running*. **BDM**

Killer track: *Keep On Running*

KING OF THE DELTA BLUES SINGERS

ROBERT JOHNSON

Columbia, 1961

34

Johnson had been in the ground for two decades when this rag-bag of Texas sessions was compiled by Columbia Records and launched into the folk boom. Sales were low, but no significant musician of the era was left untouched by the Mississippi man's spit-and-grit genius: squint and you'll see this album pictured on Dylan's *Bringing It All Back Home* sleeve; revisit Clapton's golden era and you'll hear covers of *Cross Road Blues* and *Ramblin' On My Mind*. Even in modern times, anyone who picks up a guitar and plays a blues progression is drinking from this source. **HY**

Killer track: *Cross Road Blues*

ON THE THRESHOLD OF A DREAM

THE MOODY BLUES

Deram, 1969

33

For one brief moment in 1968, Birmingham became the centre of the psychedelic universe and The Moody Blues were its moustachioed conduit. Opening the door to prog with *Days Of Future Passed* in 1967, someone dropped a tab and, after searching for a lost chord and finding themselves on a massive tour in the US with Cream, the *Threshold* song cycle was born. Folk, Americana, classical and psych rock blended in a continuous sci-fi-esque piece that stayed in the UK chart for 70 weeks. **JK**

Killer track: *Lovely To See You*

The Moody Blues: briefly the psychedelic universe's moustachioed conduit.

The Kinks: a gloriously shambolic live album.

YOUNGER THAN YESTERDAY

THE BYRDS

Columbia, 1967

32

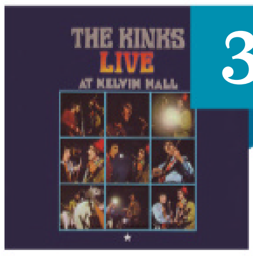
The Byrds were early adopters when it came to pyschedelia. Their 1966 single *Eight Miles High* crystallised the sound and state of mind alike. But by early 1967 they were already moving on to new pastures. While this album still swam with lysergic tracer lines, this was no hippie-era relic. Instead the band's three-man songwriting front line – Jim McGuinn (soon to rechristen himself Roger), Chris Hillman and David Crosby – mixed folk rock with flower-power anthems, the customary Dylan cover (*My Back Pages*) and, with *Time Between*, a dry run for the country-rock seam they'd soon mine. If The Byrds were America's Beatles, this was their *Revolver*. **DE**

Killer track: *So You Want To Be A Rock'N'Roll Star*

LIVE AT KELVIN HALL

THE KINKS

Pye, 1967



31

A gloriously shambolic live album from the gloriously shambolic Kinks, *Live At Kelvin Hall* is at least authentic in one respect: the sound is what you would have heard at the show;

GETTY X2

the band are largely inaudible – both to the audience and to themselves – behind an incessant wall of screaming. Their ambivalence towards live performance adds to the chaos. The genial *Sunny Afternoon* is reduced to an audience singalong, and *Tired Of Waiting* is incongruously sandwiched between the *Batman* theme and *Milk Cow Blues*. Typical Kinks. **HF**

Killer track: *You Really Got Me*

ODESSEY AND ORACLE

THE ZOMBIES

CBS, 1968

The Zombies' second album, *Odessey And Oracle* was the most glorious failure of the post-*Sgt Pepper* era. Ditching the starched suits and horn-rimmed glasses of their original British Invasion incarnation, the group took a divergent path to The Beatles; this was psychedelic baroque-pop made by people who didn't take psychedelic drugs. Its elegant musical flourishes and unalloyed romantic innocence were out of step with the increasingly cynical times – the album proved too much for most, not least The Zombies themselves, who split before it was released. The haunting album closer *Time Of The Season* gave the band a surprise posthumous US No.1, but it would be another 30 years before *Odessey And Oracle*'s greatness received its proper due. **DE**

Killer track: *Time Of The Season*

GRIS-GRIS

DR. JOHN, THE NIGHT TRIPPER

Atco, 1968

'They call me Doctor John, the night tripper,' intoned Mac Rebennack, introducing his exotic, sinister ectoplasmic gumbo of New Orleans R&B and voodoo incantation into psychedelic rock on songs like *Mama Roux* and this album's astonishing title track. Coming from the Big Easy underworld of pimps and drugs, Rebennack assumed his Dr. John persona from a same-named African potentate, unveiled through otherworldly ghost rituals, murky pulses, chants and croaking narratives. Although *Gris-Gris* failed to chart, decades later it would be hailed as the era's headiest psychedelic statement. **KN**

Killer track: *I Walk On Guilded Splinters* ▷

GETTY

Q&A

ROD ARGENT *from* THE ZOMBIES

The Zombies' second album, *Odessey And Oracle*, gave them the US smash *Time Of The Season* in 1969 – 18 months after the group, shortly to be inducted to the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, had broken up.

The Zombies' debut album, Begin Here, produced the hit She's Not There, but the three-year wait for Odessey And Oracle was a problem.
Back then albums were a still afterthought, and our first album was recorded in two days. *Odessey And Oracle* was a response to the way those singles sounded – we wanted something better.

It was recorded at Abbey Road with The Beatles' engineer, Geoff Emerick, right after they'd completed Sgt Pepper.
That was extraordinary, as we weren't EMI artists. We walked in just as The Beatles were leaving. A week before he died [in October 2018], Geoff and I had discussed his working on the Zombies' next album, so that was very sad.

Despite it reaching Number One in the US, apparently Zombies vocalist Colin Blunstone disliked Time Of The Season.
Being the last song we completed, it was recorded quite hurriedly, and I pushed Colin towards how I heard it. I still recall him saying: "Listen, if you're so good why don't you sing it?" He was pretty despondent and had no money, as Chris [White, bassist] and I were the main songwriters. But now he loves it.

How was the mood once the album was finished?
We knew it was the best we could do at the time, and it got some decent reviews, but the only person to play it on the radio was Kenny Everett. So it died a death.

After two singles had flopped, the band decided to split up.
It was a difficult decision, but even after Al Kooper helped to make *Time Of The Season* a hit in the States we resisted the offer of a million pounds to reunite. By that time I was already on course to putting my band Argent together.

Didn't Frank Beard and Dusty Hill from ZZ Top form a fake line-up to tour the album?
They were indeed among the bands that rushed to fill the void. They have admitted the fact in print.

When did you become aware of Odessey And Oracle having a second wind?
Paul Weller calling it his all-time favourite album was pretty much the start of it all.

Some artists are ambivalent about being in the Hall Of Fame, others are honoured. Where do you stand?
We've been nominated four times in the last five years and I feared we would miss out again. Making it in feels like a validation, an incredible honour. I won't diss the Hall Of fame at all. **DL**

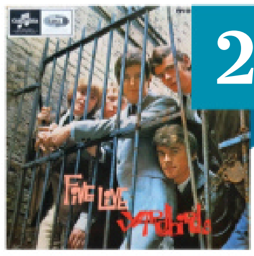
In The Beginning, a five-album coloured vinyl box, is released on February 28 via Demon.

The Yardbirds: lit the fuse of the British blues boom.

FIVE LIVE YARDBIRDS

THE YARDBIRDS

Columbia, 1964



28

One of rock's earliest under-achievers, this live smasher recorded at London's Marquee club sold miserably at the time, but lit the fuse of the British blues boom, poking a slew of amateurs to take up axes and try their luck. A precocious Eric Clapton ran the show, whether draping long-hanging leads atop *Five Long Years* or cutting loose on trademark rave-ups like *Here 'Tis*, and despite the album's limited release its cult kudos crossed continents – Joe Perry called *Too Much Monkey Business* a "blueprint for what Aerosmith tried to do". **HY**

Killer track: *Too Much Monkey Business*

OTIS BLUE

OTIS REDDING

Volt/Atco, 1965

27

Soul music in the mid-60s was a somewhat insular style, rapidly growing in popularity but strictly governed by its own traditions. *Otis Blue* shattered those restrictions as Redding applied his remarkable vocal talents to dynamic new interpretations of Sam Cooke's *Shake*, Smokey Robinson's *My Girl*, BB King's *Rock Me Baby* and, most dramatically, the Rolling Stones' *Satisfaction*. Then there was his own game-changing ballad *I've Been Loving You Too Long* and *Respect*. Soul music was never the same again. **HF**

Killer track: *Satisfaction*

THE PRETTY THINGS

The Pretty Things

Fontana, 1965

26

Just as UK suburbia's apoplectic pipe-stem-biting fathers were getting used to those neanderthal Rolling Stones, along came the ironically monikered Pretty Things to stoke fury afresh. Guitarist Dick Taylor was an ex-Stone with an attitude to match and vocalist Phil May boasted hair so long he simply had to be a degenerate. As for drummer Viv Prince? A lout. With a tortoise on a leash. This dirty-necked debut sounded as feral as they looked, and delivered urban R&B at its most savage, unhinged and sexually explicit. **IF**

Killer track: *Honey, I Need*

WHITE LIGHT/ WHITE HEAT

VELVET UNDERGROUND

Verve, 1968

25

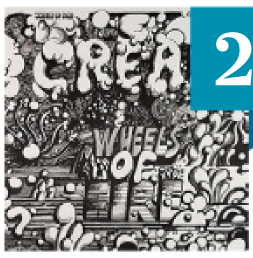
It's the Velvets' debut that always snares the plaudits. With spoonfuls of *Sunday Morning* sugar to help the *Heroin* go down, its S&M death songs offered radio-friendly safe words. But *WL/WH* took no prisoners, mainlined straight to the heart of Lou Reed's darkness. Its title track begat glam begat punk; it was outsider music's original sin, a blaze of twisted adrenal lust. *Lady Godiva's Operation* soundtracked a botched sex change, before amphetamine symphony *Sister Ray* broke every last remaining rule of what rock could, or should, be. **IF**

Killer track: *White Light/White Heat*

WHEELS OF FIRE

CREAM

Polydor, 1968



24

Wilfully schizophrenic, Cream were an improvis-ational jazz group in blues rockers' clothing, conventional in the studio in terms of their structured, verse-chorus-verse tunes; bulldozing the envelope live and taking those same songs to another planet. This half live/half studio double album showcased both. Studio highlights include the wonderfully melodic *White Room*, the pumping *Sitting On Top Of The World* and the fast-flowing *Deserted Cities Of The Heart*; on the live LP, the epic *Spoonful* was outrageous in its musical athleticism and invention; and the electrifying *Crossroads* is still breathtaking. **PH**

Killer track: *Crossroads*

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

Atlantic, 1969

23

This superstar trio (made up of former members of The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield

Creedence Clearwater Revival: a lucid antidote to psychedelic indulgence.

GETTY

and The Hollies respectively) hit upon a perfect blend of melody, harmony and instrumental finesse. Meshing electric folk, light country, pop and protest, the band let Stills handle both technical and musical duties. But it was the seamless three-part vocals that had the greatest impact, providing hits *Suite: Judy Blue Eyes* and Nash's sugary train ride *Marrakesh Express*, the latter given its first public hearing when they performed at Woodstock in August that year. **MB**

Killer track: *Long Time Gone*

PRETTIES FOR YOU

ALICE COOPER

Straight, 1969

22

Frank Zappa's Straight Records label seemed like the perfect fit for the Alice Cooper band, a bunch of outcasts who'd breezed into Los Angeles from Phoenix, Arizona, hopeful of leaving their own peculiar mark. Their debut album, *Pretties For You*, was one of the decade's more fascinating curios, flitting between psychedelia, avant-rock and left-field jazz in search of a signature sound. The group were still some way from the theatrical shock-rock that would make them superstars (hence the reason *Pretties For You* passed almost without notice), but there was enough kaleidoscopic invention on it to suggest a glittery future. **RH**

Killer track: *Reflected*

BAYOU COUNTRY

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL

Fantasy, 1969

21

Under various guises, CCR had struggled on the Californian club circuit for a decade prior to scoring their first hit with *Suzie Q* in 1968. The following year saw a prolific spurt of activity, releasing three albums in 11 months. The first of these, *Bayou Country*, repositioned them as southern-styled roots rockers, with John Fogerty's swampy, hook-rammed songs a lucid antidote to psychedelic indulgence. *Proud Mary* ushered in a run of massive international hits that resulted in Creedence Clearwater Revival outselling The Beatles by the middle of 1970. **RH**

Killer track: *Born On The Bayou*

ALAMY

Q&A

PHIL MAY *from* THE PRETTY THINGS

What has travelled across the decades when listening to the Pretty Things' first album is its sheer energy, punk aggression and raw excitement. There's an indomitable spirit to the record, born of a backs-to-the-wall siege mentality, as the band's vocalist Phil May explains.

The Pretty Things is clearly the sound of a band utterly intoxicated by the blues.

We'd found a medium we could get our rocks off on. All the music me and my mates went to see in the town halls didn't work. I remember going to Blackheath with Keith Richards and [Pretty Things guitarist] Dick Taylor to see Johnny Kidd And The Pirates because they did a couple of Arthur Alexander songs. We got our hit of that, but the rest of the set didn't work for us.

The tracks on that first album were our anthems, talking about angst, the things we were experiencing: getting spat at and turned away from restaurants. We'd found our rebel songs that expressed our fight against bureaucracy and bullshit, our marching music, so we embraced it, took it to the nth degree.

You've always retained a link with the pure R&B of that first album. The Pretty Things' final show, last year, kicked off with* Honey, I Need *and concluded with* Roadrunner*, direct lines back to your youth.

I don't know if we're looking for our youth, we're looking for the energy, the anarchy, because we got a lot of flack from the purists for that record. We were dismissed as young punks disregarding the Bible. We ripped up the supposed holy book and did it our way, and a lot of people called us thrash R&B. The people at Alexis Korner's Ealing club played it by the church rules. Certain people who did it the 'proper way' were asked to play with Alexis, while others weren't. We loved Jimmy Reed, but when we made *Big Boss Man* we rocked it out, because the people we played to wanted to dance. The purists didn't like it because they felt we were being irreverent. They thought a Jimmy Reed song should be played note for note, and we thought no, sod that, we don't want our audience falling asleep, so we cut loose. We were on amphetamines as well, so if we'd played it slow we'd have had the nadgers.

From 1964 to '66 The Pretty Things were also pioneers in the field of rock'n'roll bad behaviour.

I'm not proud of that, but when you're in a hotel paying the same money as everyone else and are asked to eat in your room because you look disgusting and put people off their food, it makes you angry. Or you walk into a pub and they say: "Get out, you're not being served." It was like a long-hair apartheid. Wherever we went we were shunned. So we kicked back. We got such shitty treatment from the 'greys', the normals all around us, that we developed a siege mentality and fought our corner. **IF**

Blues, Green And Greatness

Having recorded a landmark album, **John Mayall** faced the uneviable task of following it – having also just lost Eric Clapton from his band. The result was a record that many say is just as good.

Words: **David Sinclair**

20 A HARD ROAD

JOHN MAYALL

Decca, 1966

Killer track:
The Supernatural

The sun is shining but the temperature is cold as John Mayall talks on the phone from his home in Los Angeles. The expatriate English bluesman and bandleader, who did as much as any musician to shape the course of rock music in the 1960s, is now 85 and still working at a furious pace. The old adage 'It's a great life if you don't weaken' could have been coined for Mayall. He is brisk and businesslike as he talks up yet another new release, 2018's *Nobody Told Me*, which is estimated to be his 67th album (excluding compilations). It is a storied collection of old and new blues songs, and features a star-studded cast of guest guitarists: Joe Bonamassa, Larry McCray, Todd Rundgren, Alex Lifeson, Steven Van Zandt and Carolyn Wonderland.

"I didn't really choose those people," Mayall says nonchalantly. "When the word got out that I wanted some guitar players, those were the ones that wanted to volunteer. It all seemed to happen very naturally. I was very honoured that they all wanted to do something with me."

Of the guitarists involved, only Bonamassa showed up in person at the studio in California, where the album was recorded. The others overdubbed their contributions and wired them in from wherever they were at the time. And, Mayall says, he didn't give them directions as to what he wanted them to play. "No, nothing like that. We just sent them the tapes and it was entirely up to them what they did with it."

Is there any track that stands out above the others?

"No. If I put an album together, all the songs have to be something I'm totally thrilled with. I don't put out anything that's not up to my expectations. That's always been the way."

Mayall suffered an unspecified health problem in 2018. "I can't really remember the details," he insists. "But I was hospitalised for a while so that kind of slowed things down. But everything's back to normal now."

Which means that as well as the new album there are a couple of months of one-night stands across Europe coming up with his regular touring band – who, in accordance with Mayall's traditional working practices, are required to load their own gear. "We don't have a crew."

Although passionate about the music which has been his life's work, Mayall is unsentimental and oddly detached about his achievements of the past. He abandoned the Bluesbreakers brand more than 10 years ago ("That name was something from the past. There was no need for it.") And the way he tells it, the story of the 1960s was simply a matter of him taking care of business and putting one foot in front of the other.

If that is really the case, then he must have been wearing seven-league boots. The history of the Bluesbreakers in the 1960s is so turbulent and fast-moving it's like a rock'n'roll creation story. The big bang came with the release of the so-called Beano album on July 22, 1966, establishing Eric Clapton as a Godhead of the new generation of guitarists and enshrining Mayall as the most important pioneer, if not mastermind, behind the British blues-rock explosion that followed.

That triumph was all the more extraordinary given that Clapton had already left the Bluesbreakers before that hugely influential album was even released. But, contrary to what you might expect, the business of finding a new guitarist and writing and recording a follow-up album did not phase Mayall in the slightest.

"For me it's never been a problem," he says bluntly. "Somehow or other I'm always able to find somebody else and make a different band. We were so busy, as usual, playing so many gigs a year that when it came time to make a new album there was more than enough stuff to put on there. I never even thought about the success of the previous album. The comparison with what had gone before never bothered me. It's not a competitive thing."

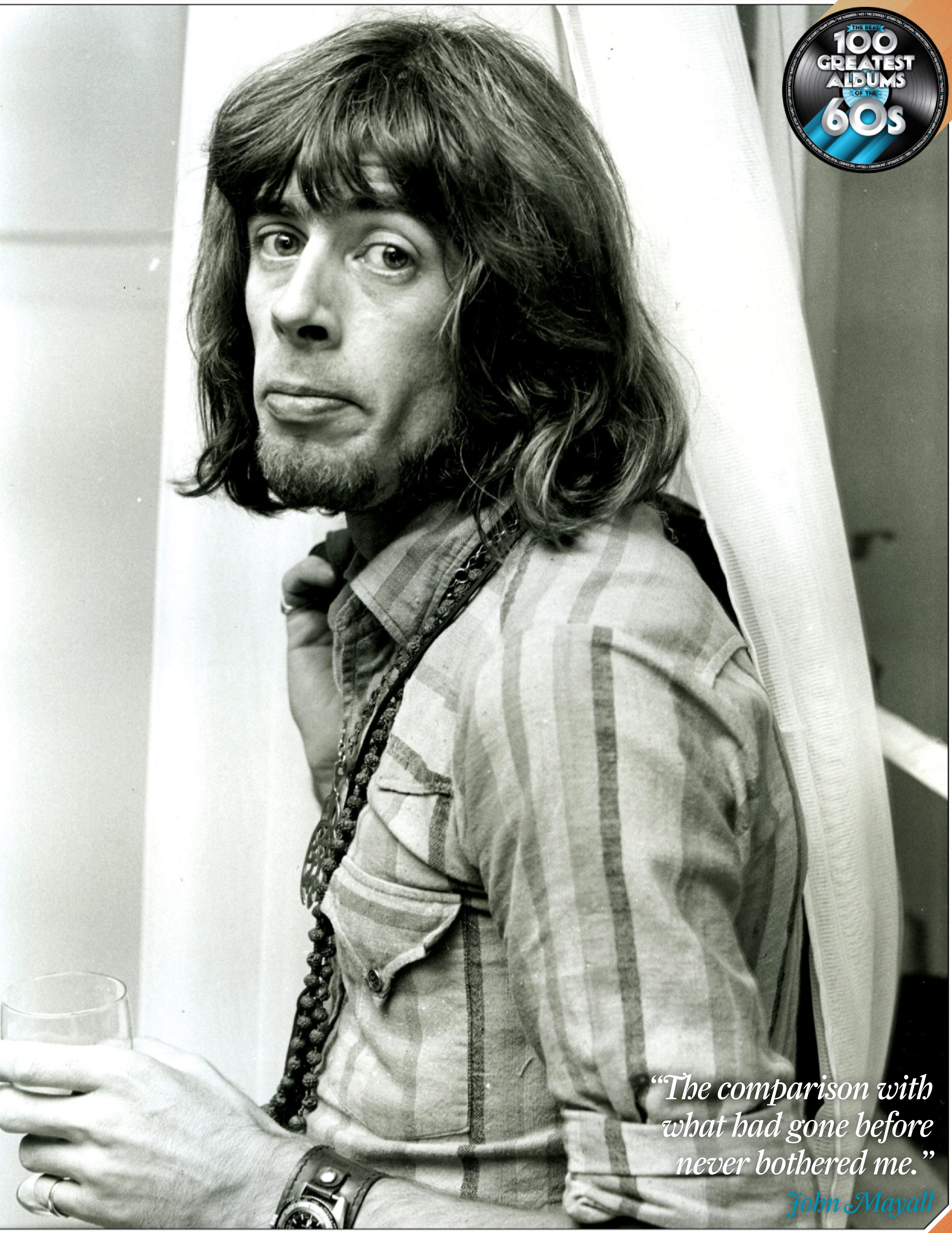
Competitive or not, Mayall's second studio album, *A Hard Road*, released on February 17, 1967, proved that the Beano album was no accident and confirmed Mayall's pre-eminence not only as a bandleader but also as one of the latter-day visionaries of the blues genre. It has always languished in the shadow of the Beano album, but in truth *A Hard Road* is a work of similarly historic importance, introducing as it did the genius of Peter Green – not only as lead guitarist but also singer and songwriter – and laying the foundations of the band that would become Fleetwood Mac.

"When Eric left there was probably about a week or ten days when we were just trying different guitar players," Mayall recalls. "Peter was the one who was very pushy about it and told me he was better than everybody else. Once I heard him play, I realised he was quite right about that."

Mayall also had to replace Hughie Flint, the drummer who had played with him since the beginning of the Bluesbreakers in 1964. "He just wanted to get out of the music business," Mayall says. "He was tired of travelling up and down the M1. He got depressed and didn't want to do it any more."

Mayall spotted Aynsley Dunbar playing drums with Alexis Korner's band and invited him join the Bluesbreakers. Dunbar ▷

ALAMY



The Real 100 Greatest Albums of the 60s

"The comparison with what had gone before never bothered me."
John Mayall

Peter Green: a special talent who lit up the *A Hard Road* album.

played his first gig with the band with no rehearsal. "All rehearsals were done on stage in front of an audience, or you might get a run-through before doing a take in the recording studio," Dunbar recalled.

The recording of *A Hard Road* took place over just four days during October 1966 at Decca studios in London with a line-up of Mayall, Green, Dunbar and the incumbent John McVie on bass. As with the Beano album, the producer was Mike Vernon, at that time a staff producer at Decca who had been instrumental in getting Mayall signed to the label in the first place.

Recorded on four-track tape, the album was put together with a speed and lack of fuss that remains a hallmark of Mayall's working practices. "It's very easy to make a record," he says, breezily. "You just go into the studio during the day and do it. We basically played the songs the way we would normally do at a gig. When it comes to blues and jazz, you want to capture the spontaneity of it. You can't keep overdubbing and building it up that way. To have it come alive you must be getting that energy that happens when you're on first and second takes."

A Hard Road is primarily a mixture of Mayall compositions and blues standards. Foremost of eight Mayall originals is the title track, piano-driven and with a high, yearning vocal and a lyric full of sorrow: *'I've been trying to tell you people that the blues hit me in my life/You know I was born for trouble and it's a hard road till I die'*. As a personal and musical manifesto, Mayall has never bettered this tale of road-dog woe.

No less impressive are the contributions from Green, most notably on two instrumentals: *The Stumble*, a sprightly shuffle written by Freddie King, and Green's own composition *The Supernatural*. This latter's haunting refrain remains a sonic masterpiece, harnessing a series of controlled, one-note feedback loops to conjure a fabulous combination of mood and melody. Where innovators such as Jeff Beck and Pete Townshend had previously used feedback as a tool for unleashing anarchy and aggression, Green here uses it to create a more refined and eerily atmospheric effect. The track was a harbinger of the commercial success he would later enjoy with Fleetwood Mac's evergreen hit *Albatross*. "Peter played some really wonderful stuff," Mayall allows. "Everything happened very naturally and it was all very successful."

Also pointing to the future were the two songs on *A Hard Road* on which Green takes lead vocals: *You Don't Love Me*, a song written by Chicago bluesman Willie Cobbs, and Green's own composition *The Same Way*, a languid, stop-start love song, arranged with a delicious sense of precision and space. Like Clapton, whom Mayall encouraged to sing his first recorded vocal, on the Beano album, Green would soon become one of the distinctive voices in British rock.

"I'd heard him singing and I wanted to feature that aspect of his work," Mayall says, in his usual matter-of-fact manner. While this is hardly the most ringing endorsement, Mayall's respect for Green's talent is evidenced by the freedom he gave him on these tracks, and others recorded at this time which were included in the expanded versions of *A Hard Road* released in 2003 and 2006, most notably the exquisitely mournful *Out Of Reach*, written and sung by Green in an aching, world-weary voice, and a lean version of JB Lenoir's chilling *Alabama Blues*.

> *"Peter Green told me he was better than everybody else. Once I heard him play, I realised he was right."*
>
> *John Mayall*

With Green and McVie forming an ever closer bond, the sense of a band growing within a band became manifest when Dunbar left the Bluesbreakers soon after the release of *A Hard Road* and was replaced by Mick Fleetwood. This brief but nevertheless classic line-up can be heard to amazing effect on the pair of official bootleg albums *Live In 1967* and *Volume 2*, released in 2014 and 2016. It ➢

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Martin Turner – lead vocalist and key creative force of the original Wishbone Ash

was no surprise that less than a year after these performances were recorded, Green, McVie and Fleetwood had left the band and the self-titled first album by Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac was riding high in the UK chart. Mayall, meanwhile, had put together another, completely new version of the Bluesbreakers featuring an unknown guitarist called Mick Taylor, who would later join the Rolling Stones.

"It seems to be the story of my life," Mayall says. "I put a band together, and then you get these offshoots."

In much the same way as Fleetwood Mac grew out of the Bluesbreakers, so Cream grew out of a pre-Beano album line-up of the band which featured Clapton alongside Jack Bruce on bass and, on one occasion, Ginger Baker on drums.

"Everything you've read about Ginger is very true," Mayall says. "He's a character, and you'd better not cross him otherwise he'll get violent with you. I don't know whether he's mellowed or not. I haven't seen him for years. But in those days he was very ferocious. He sat in with us one time as far as I can remember, and that was when he, Jack and Eric got talking in dark corners about their own futures."

While Mayall was too busy doing his own gigs to see a lot of other shows, he frequently crossed paths with 1960s legends, including Jimi Hendrix.

"I think he frightened all the English guitar players," he says. "At the same time, he was in awe of the English guitarists himself. He was a great guy. He sat in with the Bluesbreakers a few times, once at the Speakeasy and, I think, at Klook's Kleek. It was real casual."

While the lyrics of his songs bear eloquent testimony to the heartache at the root of the blues, Mayall is not prone to self-analysis or introspection and gives very little away about his personal life. He has been married and divorced twice, and was living in the South London suburb of Lee Green with his first wife and four children when the Bluesbreakers were in full swing. How did he square that with playing six or seven gigs a week?

"Well, you'd drive home every night, unless you were too far away. I don't know. It's just what you do. It doesn't seem unusual at all. The music is the main thing. If you love the music, you get to express yourself. And that makes up for the time on the road."

Mayall stood apart, in various regards, from the stars that he discovered and nurtured in the 1960s. He was about a decade older than most of his musical contemporaries. So when Peter Green, aged 19, joined the Bluesbreakers, Mayall was 33. While not quite from a different generation, Mayall came from a different world. The son of a jazz guitarist (Murray Mayall), he grew up in a village outside Manchester. "To begin with I listened to jazz and not much blues," he says. "That's what we heard mostly round the house." He enrolled in the Royal Engineers as part of his National Service, and served in Korea. Returning to Manchester, he worked in advertising as a graphic designer until he was 30. An accomplished artist, Mayall painted the portrait of the band on the cover of *A Hard Road* himself. The four faces looming out of a wintry backdrop has become an iconic image of the 1960s.

ALAMY

'A Hard Road confirmed Mayall's pre-eminence as one of the latter-day visionaries of the blues genre.'

Mayall eventually moved to London as a full-time musician, helped and encouraged by the blues bandleader Alexis Korner. "Alexis introduced me to a lot of the club people in London, so he was an important friend. But I don't think we had all that much in common other than that we all loved the blues."

Being a bandleader is not the same as being a bandmate, and Mayall's relationship with the many musicians who passed through the Bluesbreakers was more paternal than fraternal. With his huge record collection and an encyclopaedic knowledge of the blues, he was an experienced mentor for many of them. And, ultimately, he was the employer of all of them.

"That's right," he says. "I pay the wages. If you're a band leader you know exactly what you want and you tell the musicians what you're after, and if they're the right musicians they fall right into it. For me it's always been a very simple thing."

Mayall will be back in London in 2019 when he plays six shows over three nights at famed London jazz club Ronnie Scott's on April 16, 17 and 18, accompanied by the sensational Carolyn Wonderland on lead guitar along with his rhythm section stalwarts Greg Rzab (bass) and Jay Davenport (drums).

Looking back now, does he consider *A Hard Road* to be one of his great albums?

"All my records are indelibly connected with what I felt at any given time," he says. "I consider all my albums, that I've had control of, to be proud moments for me – to know that they're finished and that they've gone out into the world."

A Hard Road reached No.8 in the UK, but has always remained in the shadow of the Beano album. Is it underrated?

"I don't think so. I think my music has always been something that will never hit the big time. I'd hate to be doing something that was more commercial and you get stuck with playing the same things. Whereas blues players, like jazz musicians, always have the freedom to explore what you're doing." ●

JOHN WESLEY HARDING

BOB DYLAN

Columbia, 1967

19

A motorcycle crash in 1966 was a blessing in disguise for Bob Dylan. Recuperation in upstate New York allowed him to shake off the hated 'Voice Of A Generation' tag, and when he re-emerged it was with an album that bucked contemporary trends in favour of rootsy folk and country influences. The title track found him mining old outlaw myths of the west, while he assumed a hipster biblical prophet role on *All Along The Watchtower*. Over 50 years on, it reads like a Rosetta Stone for modern Americana. **DE**

Killer track: *All Along The Watchtower*

THERE ARE BUT FOUR SMALL FACES

SMALL FACES

Immediate / Decca, 1967

18

This collection of the band's self-titled third album, plus select singles, was not only their most mature record but the one that best illustrated the many colours of the mid-60s – from Mod pop (*Get Yourself Together*) to psychedelia (*Up The Wooden Hills*) to pastoral folk (*Green Circles*). For distribution of talent, looks and creative input, the Small Faces were second only to The Beatles, but they've never transcended their underdog status. **BDM**

Killer track: *Itchycoo Park*

VINCEBUS ERUPTUM

BLUE CHEER

Philips, 1968

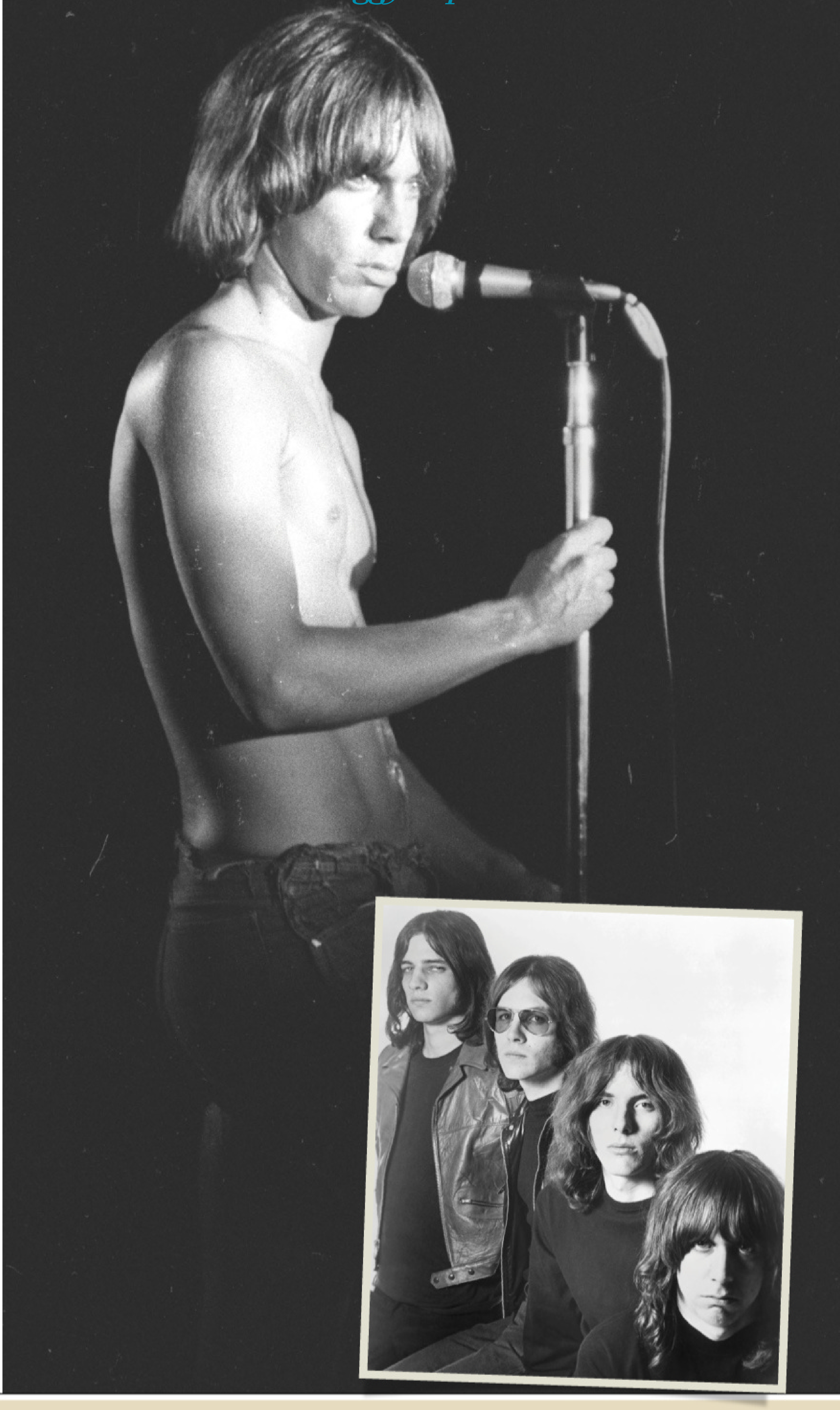
17

By accentuating the blues root of rock'n'roll – grinding tempos back to a deliberate pace and filling any gaps in their sound by cranking up their volume into the arena of the nosebleed – Blue Cheer can stake reasonable claim to have invented heavy metal and the power trio format. Named after and fuelled by Owsley's acid, they harnessed the psychedelic extremes that lay dormant in their instruments and, with *Vincebus Eruptum*, realised hard rock's true potential. **IF**

Killer track: *Summertime Blues*

"At our first gigs I wore white face paint, an aluminium foil Afro wig, never spoke…"

Iggy Pop



Rebels Without A Cause

In 1969 four "unlikely visionaries" shaped the future of rock'n'roll and brilliantly captured a young, fiery generation in turmoil. Punk? Grunge? Glam? So much of it started here.

Words: **Ian Fortnam**

16 THE STOOGES

THE STOOGES

Elektra, 1969

Killer track
I Wanna Be Your Dog

Iggy Pop and (inset) with The Stooges: (l-r) Scott Asheton, Ron Asheton, Dave Alexander, Iggy Pop.

It's abundantly clear that the 60s were a time of boundless innovation, that forward momentum was at a premium and that the future couldn't happen quickly enough. Yet while the decade sired countless albums of influence, no single recording sounded more like a portal into the future than The Stooges' self-titled debut.

The Stooges had formed in Ann Arbour, Michigan, close enough to Detroit to become immersed in the city's burgeoning musical culture. Aside from Berry Gordy's all-conquering Motown label, rock'n'roll show bands (all synchronised dance steps and explosive energy) dominated a vibrant live circuit. Compelling performers like Mitch Ryder And The Detroit Wheels captured the imagination of a young drummer called James Newell Osterberg who'd experienced an epiphany witnessing a soundcheck by The Decibels, featuring Bob Seger, at high school: "I'd never heard a Fender Twin Reverb turned up past five before and it just intoxicated me. It was the fucking devil."

Osterberg latterly joined The Iguanas, so his next band, The Prime Movers called him Iggy. On switching to vocals, Iggy formed the Psychedelic Stooges with 'high school drop-outs' Ron Asheton, Scott Asheton and Dave Alexander, who called him Pop, and set about reinventing the blues. Upon gaining a reputation for unpredictable live performances, the band were snagged for Elektra by Danny Fields – who was in Detroit to witness the MC5, but equally entranced by their support band.

One of the reasons The Stooges' debut record sounded so fresh, new, immediate and raw is because that's exactly what it was. When the band entered New York City's Hit Factory studio in April '69 with producer (recently ex-Velvet Underground alumnus) John Cale, they only had five coherent songs: *1969*, *I Wanna Be Your Dog*, *No Fun*, *Ann* and *We Will Fall*. "Before we were a straight rock'n'roll band we were very experimental," understates Iggy. "At our first gigs we had instruments onstage I invented from things I found in junk yards… I wore white face-paint, an aluminium foil Afro wig, never spoke and never had a written lyric. Until we recorded our first album there was no written or repeated Stooges song. Shows were a stream of consciousness. I ordered the band never to end a song because I didn't want people to have a chance to accept it or not. That's when we instituted leaving in a hail of feedback. If it was still feeding back we could get off the stage before they had a chance to do anything about it."

Once recorded, and even with *We Will Fall* stretched out to over ten minutes, they still had only 25 minutes of music in the can and Elektra weren't impressed. Consequently, the band had to write three more songs overnight. *Real Cool Time*, *Not Right* and *Little Doll* might have been conjured up on the spot, but stood the test of time. While *The Stooges* – now weighing in at a slimline 34 minutes – sizzled with electricity throughout its eight-track duration, it boasted two particular songs that between them provided a perfect blueprint for rock's future. *I Wanna Be Your Dog* and *No Fun* preceded and precipitated glam, punk, grunge, alt.rock and much else with a sullen street-born simplicity, an unprecedented level of unrepentant nihilism and juvenile delinquency that, in the case of the entirely timeless *Dog*, oozed with a tangible undercurrent of dark, forbidden sex.

I Wanna Be Your Dog was, in the best meaning of the word, filth. If you could listen to it without craving instantaneous physical gratification, there was probably something wrong with you. *No Fun* meanwhile, leant on a muscle car reeking of Thunderbird wine – the ultimate four-chord 'fuck-you'. When the Sex Pistols briefly dropped their carefully constructed year-zero guard in '77 to hijack it for *Pretty Vacant*'s b-side it defined them perfectly. Strip away the safety pins, sneers and haberdashery, and *No Fun*'s legacy runs through punk like a spine.

The Stooges was the sound of industrial Detroit, its revolutionary fervour matching its politicised time. With Motor City burning, the Vietnam draft and civil rights at the forefront of youth consciousness, The Stooges' debut mirrored the existential angst of a newly radicalised generation in turmoil. Urban desperation defined in a compelling hybrid of garage rock brevity and free-jazz autonomy, edged into the arena of genius by the mesmeric drones John Cale co-opted from New York's avant garde, developed with the Velvet Underground, and perfected here with *I Wanna Be Your Dog*'s nagging one-note piano riff and insistent sleigh bells.

The Stooges' idiot savant combination of simplicity and swagger rivals *Ramones* as the ultimate example of no-fat, frill-free, D-U-M-B brilliance. Teen inarticulacy distilled to its volatile essence, restless adolescent boredom as a fine art. Dean's *Rebel Without A Cause*, Brando's *Wild One*, *My Generation*'s stuttering pill-blocked narrator, recast for a newly disillusioned constituency of Altamont-bound cannon fodder in the person of Iggy Pop.

Iggy's firecracker instability counterbalanced the thuggish reliability of guitarist Ron Asheton, his younger brother Scott (drums) and bassist Dave Alexander – a man so dedicated to the hoodlum lifestyle that he dropped out of his senior high-school year after 45 minutes in order to win a bet. Together they unleashed *The Stooges*, punk rock's crucible, the sound of four unlikely visionaries staring down the barrel of an uncertain future.

GETTY X2

IAN ANDERSON *from* JETHRO TULL

Q&A

The prog legends' flute-brandishing frontman on their pivotal, game-shifting second album, which took them away from the blues and introduced the style that brought them huge success.

Words: **Dave Everley**

15 STAND UP

JETHRO TULL

Chrysalis, 1969

Killer track:
Nothing Is Easy

The first Jethro Tull album, This Was, was blues with added flute. What changed when you came to the follow-up?
The first album was an entree into having an audience and just being able to make a record. I was really keen to try and develop the band in a bit more of a direction that the British press would call progressive rock music. At that time I was going to see at the Marquee Club King Crimson, the very first concerts by Yes. They gave me a little bit of confidence that I could be more adventurous.

Between the two records, why was original guitarist Mick Abrahams replaced by Martin Barre?
I doffed my cap initially to Mick Abrahams. He was a great guitarist, a confident singer and a strong, dominant figure on stage. But what I wanted was out of his comfort zone. He was a dyed-in-the-wool blues and R&B guy. He wanted to make *This Was Part II*. I persuaded him to play on [1968 non-album single] *Love Story* but he was out of the band by the time it was released.

What prompted the change in direction with Stand Up? Boredom?
Well, I've always said that progressive rock is driven by boredom of playing the same things over and over again. And the more you get into music as a young professional, the more you become aware of things.

There was a huge amount of stuff that I wanted to try and put my spin on. I was just beginning to listen to classical music, for instance, with a view to not just hearing it but listening to some things and finding some ideas. In fact [there were] only two areas where I really felt I never wanted to try to draw from, and that was country and western and anything that involved the Hawaiian guitar.

What do you remember about making the Stand Up record?
Well, it was certainly a job of work in the sense that we were working to a pretty tight time framework. You had to finish an album because we had tour dates booked and things were happening. And the music was pretty simple, so it didn't require a huge amount of rehearsal.

GETTY

“Progressive rock is driven by boredom of playing the same things over and over again.”

Was the track A New Day Yesterday inspired by a specific person?
Hardly any of my songs are actually about a given person or a given relationship, because I’ve always felt nervous about writing about specifics. Maybe this comes from listening to Roy Harper, who would write some quite personal songs that were obviously born of personal experience in some deep emotional or even sexual moment. That would have just felt like a betrayal for me.

You toured with Led Zeppelin in 1969. Did you share their fondness for rock’n’roll behaviour?
Absolutely not. I never had a taste for alcohol at that stage. I certainly never did the druggie thing. I suppose it was the experience of having grown up with so many heroes who had snuffed it, usually because of heroin or alcohol or both. I’d see people like Graham Bond shooting up on stage. It was a sad, awful thing. And he threw himself under a fucking Tube train out of desperation. No, that wasn’t for me.

Stand Up was Jethro Tull’s first Number One album. What did that feel like?
Well, you might have had your first Number One, but it could also be your last one. I’m afraid that reality and low expectations always reign supreme in the end. I’ve never been one to think: “We’re going to end up playing at Shea Stadium or Madison Square Garden in a year’s time”, or even that it would last forever.

How did Stand Up change things for Jethro Tull?
You have to remember that we were guys that were playing at some pub a year or two before, and getting fifty quid a night – if we were lucky – to split between you and pay for the petrol. You really do carry that with you – you felt quite naughty being super-famous and headlining big venues when you still thought of yourself as a bunch of kids who just came from the pub. It’s always worth remembering where you came from.

ALAMY

KICK OUT THE JAMS

MC5

Elektra, 1969

Constantly flaring from epic climax to raw crescendo, from apex to apogee, *Kick Out The Jams* was a feedback-drenched testimonial to pure intensity. Fred ‘Sonic’ Smith and Wayne Kramer’s duelling dual guitars unleashed relentless tirades of screaming über-rock invective as, surging in support, Michael Davis and Dennis Thompson’s bass and drums added groove, underpinned with funk, melded the whole into a seething morass of jazz-brained improvisational magic. And as Rob Tyner emoted, harnessing a spiralling revolutionary zeitgeist, Detroit’s MC5 captured the greatest live album of them all. **IF**

Killer track: *Kick Out The Jams*

TOMMY

THE WHO

Decca, 1969

With *Tommy*, Pete Townshend made his biggest leap away from the three-minute pop song yet, and pioneered the rock-opera format through this album’s bizarre narrative – ostensibly about a boy rendered blind, deaf and dumb who turns out to be a dab hand at pinball, but also about more everyday human strife. Performed live it brought out the best in the band yet, Roger Daltrey especially, and Ken Russell’s odd, lurid film version gave the 60s one of its most striking cinematic enigmas. And for all the quirkier vignettes about new arrivals (*It’s A Boy*), pervy uncles (*Fiddle About*) and the like, highlights such as *Pinball Wizard* indicated the start of bigger, meatier rock classics to come from The Who. **PG**

Killer track: *Pinball Wizard*

Jefferson Airplane: *Surrealistic Pillow* took the band way beyond their folk origins.

ASTRAL WEEKS

VAN MORRISON

Warner Bros, 1968

Amid the wilting flower children and dead-eyed rock’n’rollers of 1968, Van Morrison stood apart. The Belfast bruiser was a natural-born malcontent, with a voice like ripping velvet, and his second solo album bridged earthly beauty and spiritual transcendence. *‘If I ventured in the slipstreams, between the viaducts of your dream,’* Van sang on the opening title track, an East Side mystic embarking on a journey that passed through innumerable musical dimensions: rock, jazz, R&B, blues, folk and other less tangible forms. At heart, cornerstone tracks *Cypress Avenue* and *Madame George* were a road map to Morrison’s childhood. But really, *Astral Weeks* contained entire universes in its soul. **DE**

Killer track: *Astral Weeks*

SURREALISTIC PILLOW

JEFFERSON AIRPLANE

RCA, 1967

The Airplane’s second album unleashed new drummer Spencer Dryden and powerhouse vocalist Grace Slick, whose acid vocals took the band way beyond their folk origins. Boasting talent across the board, their West Coast sound had cultural and commercial impact, sharing contemporary chart listings with *Sgt. Pepper* and The Doors’ debut. Slick’s operatic LSD anthem *White Rabbit* epitomised the Airplane’s’s trip, while Marty Balin’s *Plastic Fantastic Lover* and Jorma Kaukonen’s *Embryonic Journey* maintained the gold standard. Trivia: *My Best Friend*, duetted by Slick and future partner Paul Kantner, was written by departing drummer Skip Spence. **MB**

Killer track: *Somebody To Love*

Fire Starter

When Daily Flash drummer Jon Keliehor found himself in **The Doors** camp just as their debut album was coming to life, a whirlwind of 60s West Coast musical adventures ensued.

Words: **Max Bell**

In the summer of 1966, 25-year-old drummer Jon Keliehor was having breakfast in Duke's Coffee Shop, the café of the Tropicana Motel, a popular haunt for local or visiting rock musicians in West Hollywood. Sitting next to him was a man he vaguely recognised, sporting fetching sideburns and smart modish attire. They got chatting. "I asked him if he was staying in the Tropicana," Keliehor recalls. "He said: 'No, I'm rehearsing across the street in a little studio we rented. I'm a drummer.' I said: 'Oh, so am I. What's your group?' 'We're called The Doors. My name's John Densmore.'"

So began a friendship that resulted in a most unlikely and largely unreported twist of fate, when Keliehor deputised for Densmore in a late-1967 Doors show at the Portland Memorial Coliseum.

Keliehor was in a Pacific Northwest group called The Daily Flash. He and his fellow band members had relocated from Seattle to Los Angeles. Keliehor was impressed by his new pal Densmore, although on the West Coast the Flash were arguably better known, since they'd headlined over the Quicksilver Messenger Service and Country Joe & The Fish at the Avalon Ballroom, and The Turtles and The Byrds at other clubs. They'd also been invited by the Grateful Dead to join them and Janis Joplin's Big Brother And The Holding Company at the Vancouver Trips Festival (July '66).

"A car arrived to take us to the seaside," he recalls of the latter. "The Dead's LSD chemist Stanley Owsley drove it. We fell under his spell and the spell of his magic tablets."

Densmore took his new acquaintance to The Doors studio. "All very casual," he says. "But that night I went to see them play at Pandora's Box on Sunset Boulevard. They were still wearing matching suits and ties, but it was right at the beginning of their ascendancy, before a small group of very loyal local fans. They had such magnetism, Jim Morrison in particular. It was clear everything was about to change. Next time I saw them, only weeks later, the crowds had swelled."

Watching Doors rehearsals, Keliehor heard early attempts at what became the band's self-titled debut album, which eventually sold more than 20 million copies. Containing their first single *Break On Through (To The Other Side)*, the epic No.1 *Light My Fire*, and the near-12-minute Oedipal masterpiece *The End*, as well as slices of dreamy, haunting psychedelia like *The Crystal Ship* and *End Of The Night*, *The Doors* had astonishing intensity. Its stoned-immaculate bravura established it as one of the most culturally significant recorded landmarks in American rock history.

The Daily Flash's contribution, by contrast, would be more modest. Big stars in Seattle, they were brought to LA by the notorious management team of Charles Greene and Brian Stone. "Great manipulators those two," Keliehor laughs. "But in good faith we joined a roster that included Sonny & Cher, Noel Harrison, Jackie DeShannon and Buffalo Springfield, whose debut they produced. They were real New York players who moved to LA, hired a fancy limo, walked into the MGM building like they worked there, found an unused office space, ordered a phone and literally camped out without anyone realising they had no right to be there at all!"

10 THE DOORS

THE DOORS

Elektra, 1967

Killer track:
Light My Fire

The Doors (main photograph) and their one-night-only drummer Jon Keliehor (inset).

The Daily Flash ended up supporting The Doors at the Cheetah Club, the Doors' local Venice Beach hangout, in 1967, but didn't 'break on through' themselves. They never made an album, although they did release a decent cover of Bob Dylan's *Queen Jane Approximately* in 1966, backed with their take on Blind Lemon Jefferson's *Jack Of Diamonds.*

Their follow-up single, 1967's *The French Girl*, was a folkier affair backed with *Green Rocky Road*, a staple vamp for the likes of Dave Van Ronk, Fred Neil and Tim Hardin. Still, the Flash did a great job of it themselves, and eventually made it to the movies when the song was heard in Peter Bogdanovich's 1968 film *Targets.*

In December 1966 The Daily Flash were flown to New York and enjoyed a month's residency at East Side club Ondine, a private discotheque frequented by Jimmy James (later Jimi Hendrix) and Andy Warhol, plus Factory acolytes, Jackie Kennedy… and anyone who was anyone. Noel Harrison was one such star, and he finagled the Flash a part in the TV series *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E*; in the 1967 episode *The Drublegratz Affair*, they played a camp trash number called *My Bulgarian Baby*, in a castle, while Stefanie Powers go-go danced in a cage behind them.

Ondine was prestigious and lucrative for Greene and Stone, but it wasn't public exposure. Management got the Flash just one other New York gig, in February 1967 at Stony Brook University where they supported Jefferson Airplane. It was a missed opportunity. With no album on the horizon, Greene and Stone got the Flash a regular 'house band' slot on local LA teen TV show *Boss City* where they performed other people's hits.

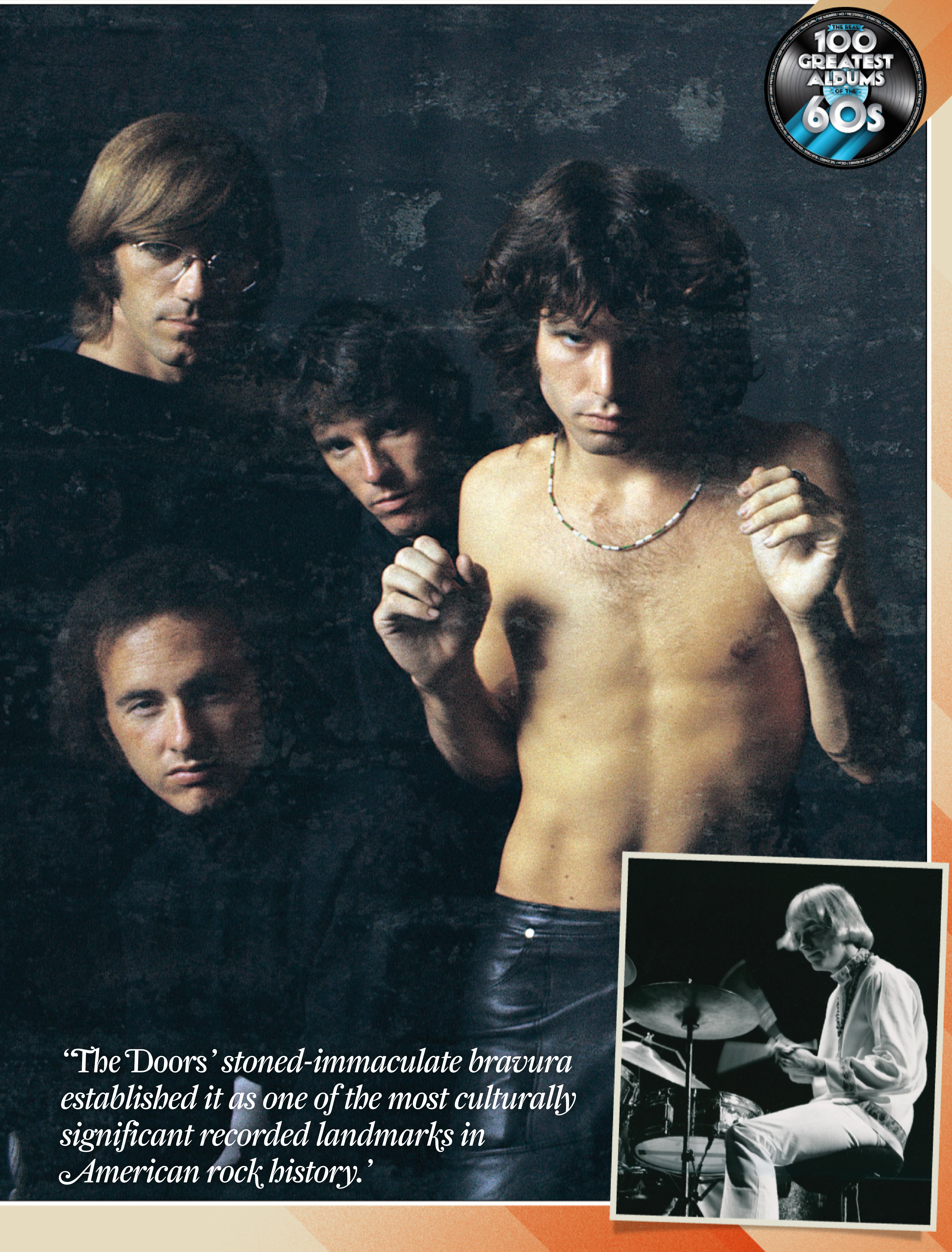
Infuriated by this arrangement, Hastings quit and briefly became a replacement for Neil Young in Buffalo Springfield, while Keliehor was sacked when he opted to take a Transcendental Meditation course rather than play a show in Las Vegas. "That meant I had no income and had to leave my house," he says.

Looking for new digs, Keliehor bumped into a fellow Seattleite, bassist Kerry Magness. He let Keliehor move in. "A street away was Paul A Rothchild, Doors producer," he remembers. "One day we brazenly walked up to him and asked if he had any work for us."

Rothchild introduced them to Elektra Records A&R man Frazier Mohawk. Mohawk had been the driving Stephen Stills and Richie Furay down Sunset Boulevard when they fatefully bumped into a hearse driven by Neil Young and Bruce Palmer, which, it's been said, led to the formation of Buffalo Springfield.

"Life was full of coincidence," Keliehor muses. "David Crosby asked me to join The Byrds when drummer Michael Clark quit, but he reappeared during a rehearsal. He walked into the studio with his suitcases in hand and wasn't too pleased to see me in his seat. That was the end of the session." ▷

THE DOORS/GETTY INSET/COURTESY OF JON KELIEHOR



'The Doors' stoned-immaculate bravura established it as one of the most culturally significant recorded landmarks in American rock history.'

The Doors: (clockwise from top left) Ray Manzarek, Jim Morrison, John Densmore and Robby Krieger.

Right: Jon Keliehor with The Daily Flash.

The Densmore and Rothchild friendships continued. Keliehor and Magness were invited to sessions for The Doors' second album, *Strange Days*, in August '67. He did some (unused) guide bass work (he didn't appear on that record but does play on *The Unknown Soldier* on The Doors' album *Waiting For The Sun*).

"I was enlisted to push a synthesiser patch," Keliehor says. "I was only there as an observer but I did an organ pre-set for Ray Manzarek. They did dozens of takes, so I got bored and left."

Then, on December 1, Keliehor received a strange request. The Doors management called him and asked: "Are you available to come to Portland tomorrow? John [Densmore] has the flu and he thought you'd be a good replacement." Keliehor hotfooted it to Portland, checked in to the Holiday Inn then went straight to the venue, the Memorial Coliseum.

"I had no practice and no sound-check," he remembers. "I waited backstage then walked out with the band. Time ceased to exist. It felt ludicrous… Jim Morrison nodded at me and then stood right behind me until he knew I was ready. The lights went down and the music began. I sensed the tempo and the beat, and then I listened like never before to the subtleties of each piece. I had to remain connected to complement the phrasing and the dynamic. Jim got nearer and nearer to the audience, and then something happened, either a profanity or he removed his clothing, or both. He certainly took his top off. A policeman came forward, grabbed him and dragged him off stage, and that was the end of the performance."

Jim Morrison was by now the biggest rock star in America. His Gloria Stavers 'Young Lion' photo-spread had just appeared in *Vogue* and *16* magazine. The Doors were featured in *Time* and *Newsweek*. In the meantime, the authorities were getting antsy, and chose Morrison as their high-profile target. Policemen had lined the stage in front of the band – a red rag to a bull like Jim. During the set, Morrison began scatting the lines to a new song, *Five To One*, in the middle of *Light My Fire*. He jumped off stage and started yelling: "The blueberries have the guns, but we have the power." A riot ensued. He was warned to return to the stage but didn't comply. The promoter was forced to pull the plug.

And so Keliehor's place in Doors' live history was short and sweet. That night he played on *Back Door Man, Soul Kitchen, Gloria, Unhappy Girl, People Are Strange* and *Light My Fire*. The band didn't get to play *The Crystal Ship, Twentieth Century Fox* or *The End*, and the following day's concert in Keliehor's home town Seattle was cancelled.

A few days later, in New Haven, Connecticut, Morrison became the first rock star to be arrested on stage. He'd been making out with a groupie in the shower stalls backstage when a police officer told the band to get out. Morrison pushed him away, and was promptly sprayed in the face with the incapacitating aerosol Mace.

Once the band were allowed to perform, Morrison cut loose. "The whole fucking world hates me…" Turning on the officer who'd blinded him 20 minutes earlier, he pointed him out. "You're a little blue man, in a little blue hat. You're a little blue pig." Then, to the audience: "I'm just like you guys, man. He did it to me, they'll do it to you."

Jim's trial was set for the following January, a bond of $1,500 being posted, but charges were dropped.

> *"Charles Manson said hello and I froze. There was a feeling of extreme evil in the room."*
> *Jon Keliehor*

Keliehor describes this time as all-out war on the hippie community. Soon after, a man would arrive hell-bent on poisoning flower power forever. "In 1968 I went with Kerry Magness to visit producer Terry Melcher at his home on 10050 Cielo Drive, with a view to working on his act Gentle Soul, fronted by Pamela Polland," Keliehor recalls. "We came into a big open-plan room. Three figures were by the window. Pamela introduced the third person, whose music she was listening to. The atmosphere was intense, and this man made me extremely nervous. 'Jon, this is my friend Charles Manson. He's a musician.' Manson said hello and I just froze. There was a feeling of extreme evil in the room."

A few weeks later the house was leased to film director Roman Polanski and Sharon Tate, and in 1969 it was the site of the infamous Manson Family murders.

Keliehor's LA sojourn didn't end there. He was part of the ill-fated group Rhinoceros, which bombed. He bailed early, but did play on David Ackles's solo debut. He and Magness were then part of the short-lived group Bodine, who in 1969 made one very obscure album. These days Keliehor lives in Glasgow and writes ambient music and composes for opera, theatre, film and contemporary ballet – anything but rock music. Somehow, one imagines Jim Morrison would approve. ●

THE DOORS/GETTY DAILY FLASH/COURTESY OF JON KELIEHOR

TOGETHER WE'RE
LOUDER
LOUDERSOUND.COM
CLASSIC ROCK
METAL HAMMER
PROG
THE BLUES

Pink Floyd: displaying a growing command of musical dynamics, which would point the way forward for the band.

UMMAGUMMA

PINK FLOYD

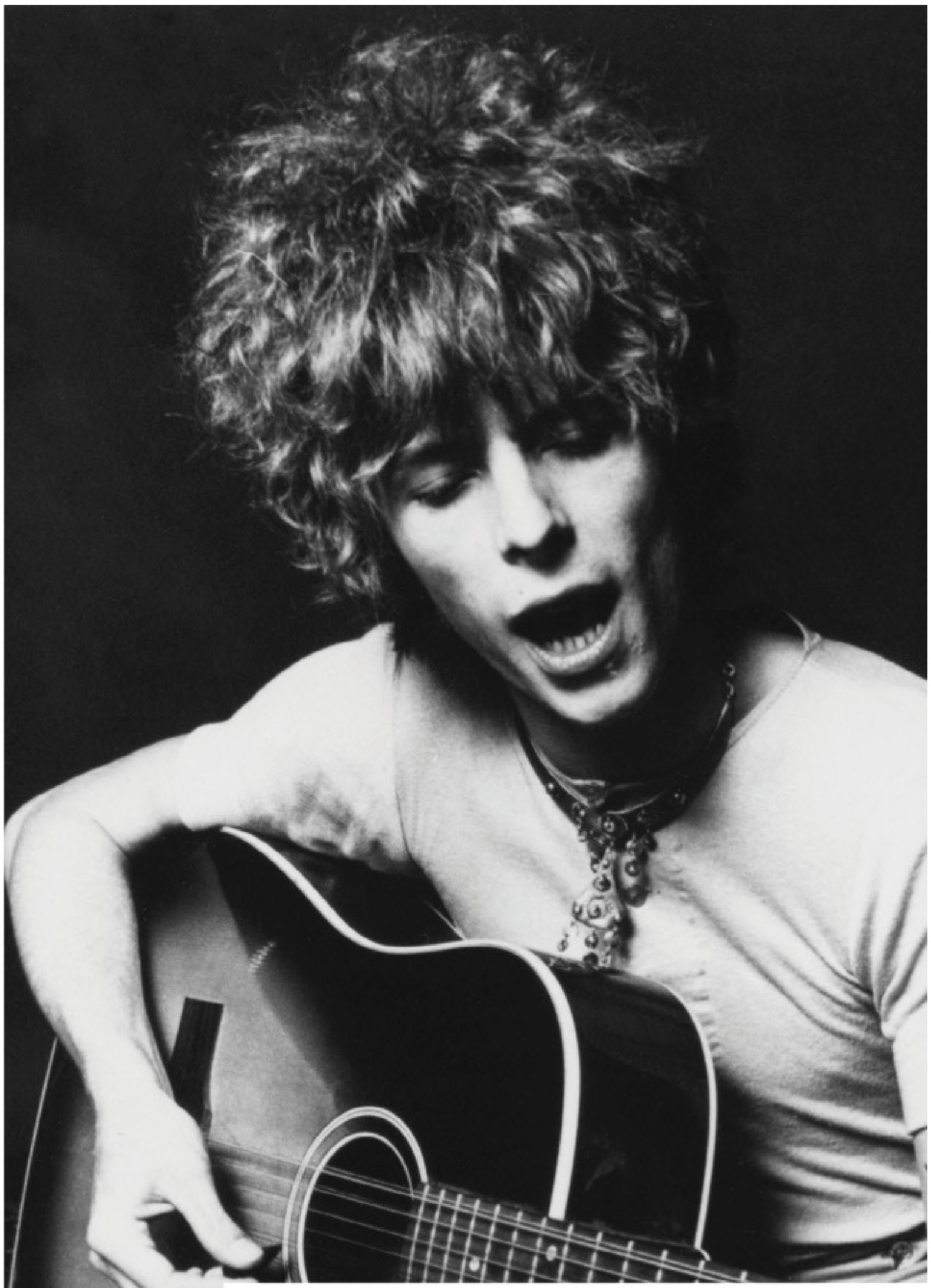
Harvest, 1969

9

Pink Floyd successfully survived the departure of their lead singer and songwriter Syd Barrett with the redoubtable *A Saucerful Of Secrets* album and the half studio/half-live double-vinyl *Ummagumma* moved the band cautiously forward. Unfortunately they didn't have time to write new group material, so they divided the studio LP into four sections, with each of them contributing a solo piece. Roger Waters supplied the best song, the wistful acoustic *Grantchester Meadows*, while the others ploughed a more experimental furrow. They weren't short of good ideas, but lacked the experience to take the listener with them. Still, at least Nick Mason spared us a drum solo.

Ultimately *Ummagumma* was 'saved' by its excellent live disc, which proved that Pink Floyd were indeed more than the sum of their parts with lengthy, tougher versions of *Astronomy Domine*, *Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun* and *A Saucerful Of Secrets*, plus the suspenseful new live favourite *Careful With That Axe Eugene*. Indeed it was their growing command of musical dynamics that would point the way forward for the band. In the meantime, the record company hedged their bets by putting out *Ummagumma* at a budget price. **HF**

Killer track: *Careful With That Axe Eugene*



David Bowie: *David Bowie* was his true lift-off moment

DAVID BOWIE

DAVID BOWIE

Deram, 1969

8

Bowie's curious 1967 debut album, a self-titled collection that aimed halfway between Anthony Newley and traditional English music hall, had sunk without a ripple. Two years later, hopes for a second eponymous LP were buoyed by the chart success of 'novelty' single *Space Oddity*, released to coincide with the Apollo Moon landing. Yet it was hardly representative of the album itself, which saw Bowie throw himself into his role as a curly-haired folkie with prog-rock tendencies, honing the songs he'd been playing at Beckenham Arts Lab.

London combo Junior's Eyes served as his backing band, with Bowie taking a digressive turn on *Unwashed And Slightly Dazed* and settling in for extended comedown *Memory Of A Free Festival*, whose vocal chorus included Marc Bolan and DJ Bob Harris. The recent dissolution of Bowie's relationship with Hermione Farthingale was clearly still very raw (as heard on *Letter To Hermione*), although the real keeper was the near-10-minute *Cygnet Committee*. An impassioned critique of empty revolution, its lyrical concerns – among them the perils of following self-appointed leaders - offer a potent foreshadow of 70s Ziggymania. As such, *David Bowie* was his true lift-off moment. **RH**

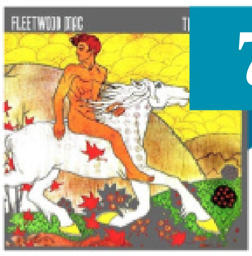
Killer track: *Cygnet Committee*

GETTY X2

THEN PLAY ON

FLEETWOOD MAC

Warner/Reprise, 1969



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While it was nowhere near as dramatic as their mid-70s reinvention, the transformation that took place between Fleetwood Mac's second and third albums was no less unimportant. Their galloping debut had set them at the head of the British blues boom, but follow-up *Mr Wonderful*, while not all disappointing, was rushed and undercooked.

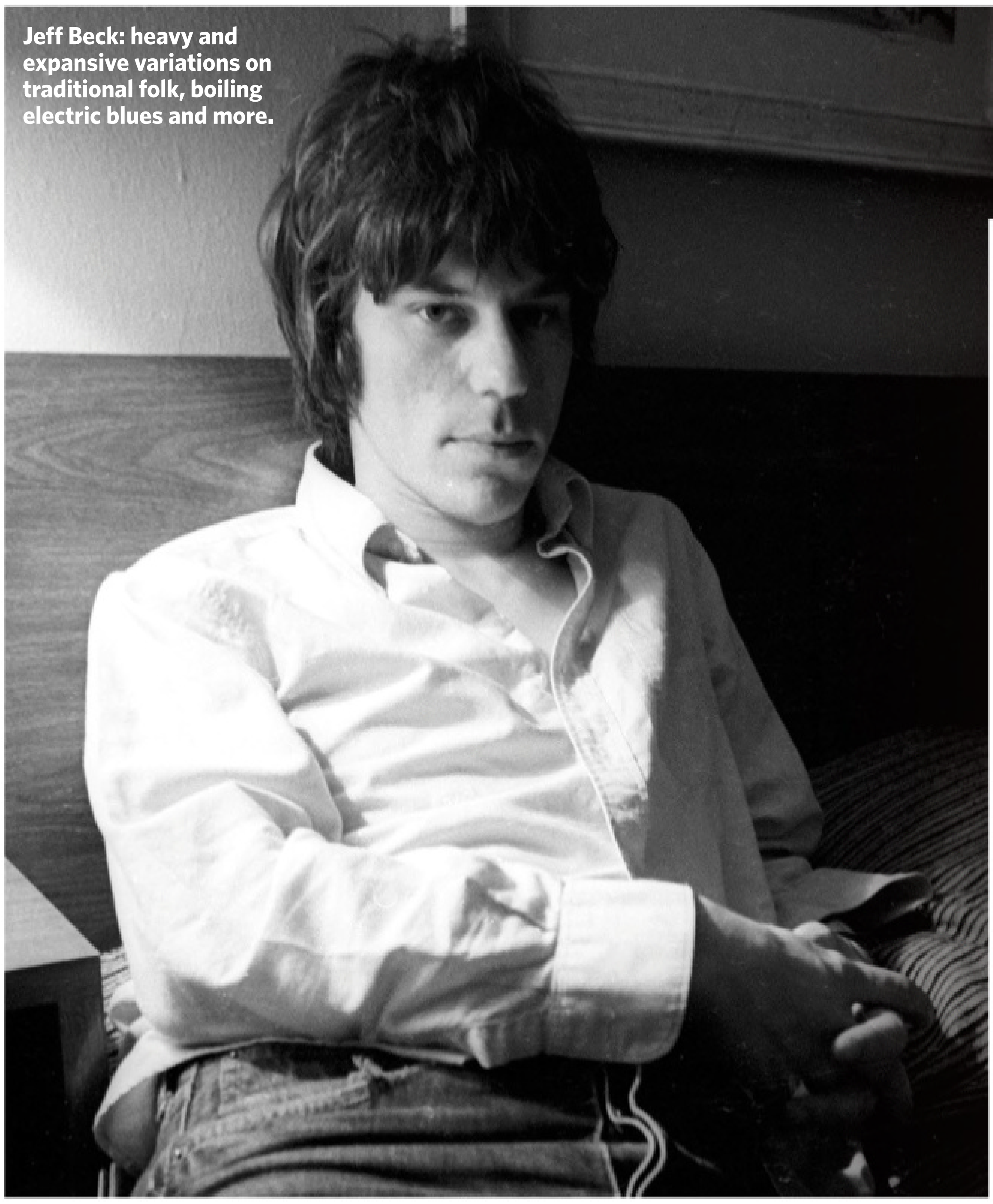
Then Play On rewrote band's playbook. *Showbiz Blues* and *One Sunny Day* were residuals of Mac Mk I, but *Coming Your Way* and the kaleidoscopic lullaby *When You Say* were the sound of a band ushering in a new era, one that acted as a bridge between the band they once were and the protean outfit they would become.

Peter Green was still in charge. His stark, solo *Closing My Eyes* was as bleak and haunting as *Man Of The World*, the stand-alone single that had acted as a signpost to the album earlier in 1969. But original guitarist Jeremy Spencer was increasingly fading into the background, his role filled by incoming teenage prodigy Danny Kirwan. The mercurial Kirwan would prove to be as tormented as he was talented, but he and Green wove magic here, each urging the other on to a higher musical plane.

Like much of early Fleetwood Mac's work, *Then Play On* would be overshadowed by the cocaine-dusted million-dollar soap opera that was the 70s Mac, but they would never have got to that point without it. **DE**

Killer track: *Close My Eyes*

Fleetwood Mac: *Then Play On* rewrote band's playbook.



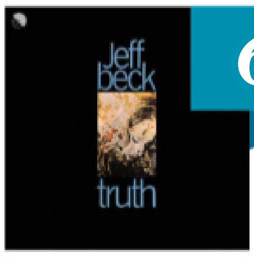
Jeff Beck: heavy and expansive variations on traditional folk, boiling electric blues and more.

GETTY, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

TRUTH

JEFF BECK

Columbia, 1968



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Jeff Beck could have gone in one of two directions after leaving The Yardbirds: quirky pop star, or bluesy guitar rocker. Thankfully, despite the chart success of 1967's *Hi Ho Silver Lining* (a single he came to loathe, likening it to a pink toilet seat hanging around his neck for the duration), he chose the latter.

His debut album *Truth* might have been credited as a solo record, but it found Beck leading a powerful quartet featuring singer Rod Stewart, bassist Ronnie Wood and drummer Micky Waller, plus an assortment of guests including Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, Keith Moon and Nicky Hopkins. Between them they cooked up heavy and expansive variations on traditional folk (Bonnie Dobson's *Morning Dew*), boiling electric blues (Willie Dixon pair *You Shook Me* and *I Ain't Superstitious*), The Yardbirds' *Shapes Of Things* (which outstripped the original) and more. Taking Ravel's famous piece as a rough guide, *Beck's Bolero* was a stunning instrumental that journeyed from woodwind whispers to proto-metal blowout, with Beck proving himself a master of both restraint and melody. *Truth* was both a landmark of British blues-rock and a near-perfect example of the wandering impulse that came to define Beck's career. **RH**

Killer Track: *Morning Dew*

Heavy Load

One of the truly great bands to come out of late-60s Britain, **Free** had talent to burn in every department. Sadly the band didn't last long enough to fulfil their true potential.

Words: **Mick Wall**

5 TONS OF SOBS

FREE

Island, 1969

Imagine a world where Led Zeppelin don't exist. Where Black Sabbath don't exist and there is no Deep Purple. Where the Rolling Stones are still just a singles band. Where Cream are on their last legs, and only this black American cat Jimi Hendrix is doing anything new and crazy.

In that world, imagine it is April 1968 and you are 15-year-old Andy Fraser, about to play your first gig with another bunch of kids at the Nag's Head, an old pre-war boozer in South London. The other three kids in the band are all older, but compared to you musically they are novices. The singer, 18-year-old Paul Rodgers, is the son of a Middlesbrough docker, one of six brothers and sisters. He'd started out as a bass player, and picked up the guitar and some piano along the way, before discovering his true musical destiny when he'd reluctantly been forced to sing one night and out came this full-moon voice that Rod Stewart later eulogised as "the best in the business".

Four years of local bands playing in local hellholes to local indifference in the northeast led to Rodgers's "pilgrimage" to the south and a further year in London with a part-time pub band called Brown Sugar. Until he met another Paul, son of TV actor David Kossoff. Koss, as he became known, was a 17-year-old classically trained guitarist brought up on Johan Sebastian Bach but in love with the blues; Eric Clapton was his god. Clapton and pep pills, which he'd been taking since he was 14, and now dope, downers and anything else he could get his itchy fingers on when they weren't clutching his stripped Les Paul.

"There was real synchronicity in my meeting with Paul Kossoff," Rodgers would tell me. "We were hungry – figuratively and metaphorically. I was always hungry because we couldn't afford anything to eat."

The two Pauls formed the band, with Rodgers as the driver. The tough school-of-life Northerner and the soft, privately educated Londoner shared the same ambition, which was, as Rodgers put it: "To be a full-time, fully professional band, no day jobs, just giving everything to the music."

The drummer was 18-year-old Simon Kirke, who Kossoff had been in Black Cat Bones with. London-born but brought up in the Shropshire countryside, he'd been inspired to pick up sticks through watching Jack Parnell and his orchestra on *Sunday Night At The London Palladium* on TV. Taking off for London in 1966, he'd promised his father he'd return if he hadn't become a pop star inside two years. He never went back.

None of the band, though, are as internally weathered as Andy McLan Fraser, tough-nut son of a Scottish plantation owner and former black slave in British Guiana (now Guyana). When dad did a bunk Andy, and his three siblings, were raised by their white English mother who held down three jobs at once in order to pay for Andy's piano lessons.

Andy was taunted at school as "a nigger" then as the "weird white kid" who played heavy monster bass in in smoky London Caribbean clubs.

Finally there came a break when his friend Sappho Korner introduced him to her dad – Alexis, godfather of the British blues scene – who was "the father I never had" to young Andy. Through Alexis came a short-lived gig with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. When that went tits-up, another brilliant Alexis recommendation led to his hooking up with "a bunch of kids" he knew from the Fickle Pickle pub in North London.

Andy, the two Pauls and Simon began by jamming on old blues schooners like BB King's *4 O'clock In The Morning* and *Spoonful*. When that went unfeasibly well and they decided to give it a go, the only thing they lacked was name.

Alexis to the rescue again: "I'd had a trio, Free At Last, with drummer Hughie Flint and bassist Binky McKenzie, but we'd only managed one record before the group folded. So when Andy Fraser and the boys needed a name for their new group I suggested Free."

"It was the perfect name for that era," Fraser would tell me years later. "It was the one thing everyone was talking about: freedom."

The name 'Free' also suggested a certain defiance, or inner-belief, he said.

"The first night we got together to audition each other, we knew we had it," Fraser recalled. There was just no doubt. We weren't afraid to go up against anyone. We would later tour with The Who, Small Faces, Family, anybody, and we were still confident in each other.

"The only thing we didn't know how to do yet was record. So when we went into Morgan studios to do our first album, *Tons Of Sobs*, we were starting from the beginning. We didn't know what it was like to try and create that good feeling at a gig in this total silence. But we learned fast. And it was always about making albums. We didn't even think about what might make a good single. Consequently we didn't even release a single from that first album. We were that good we didn't think we needed to."

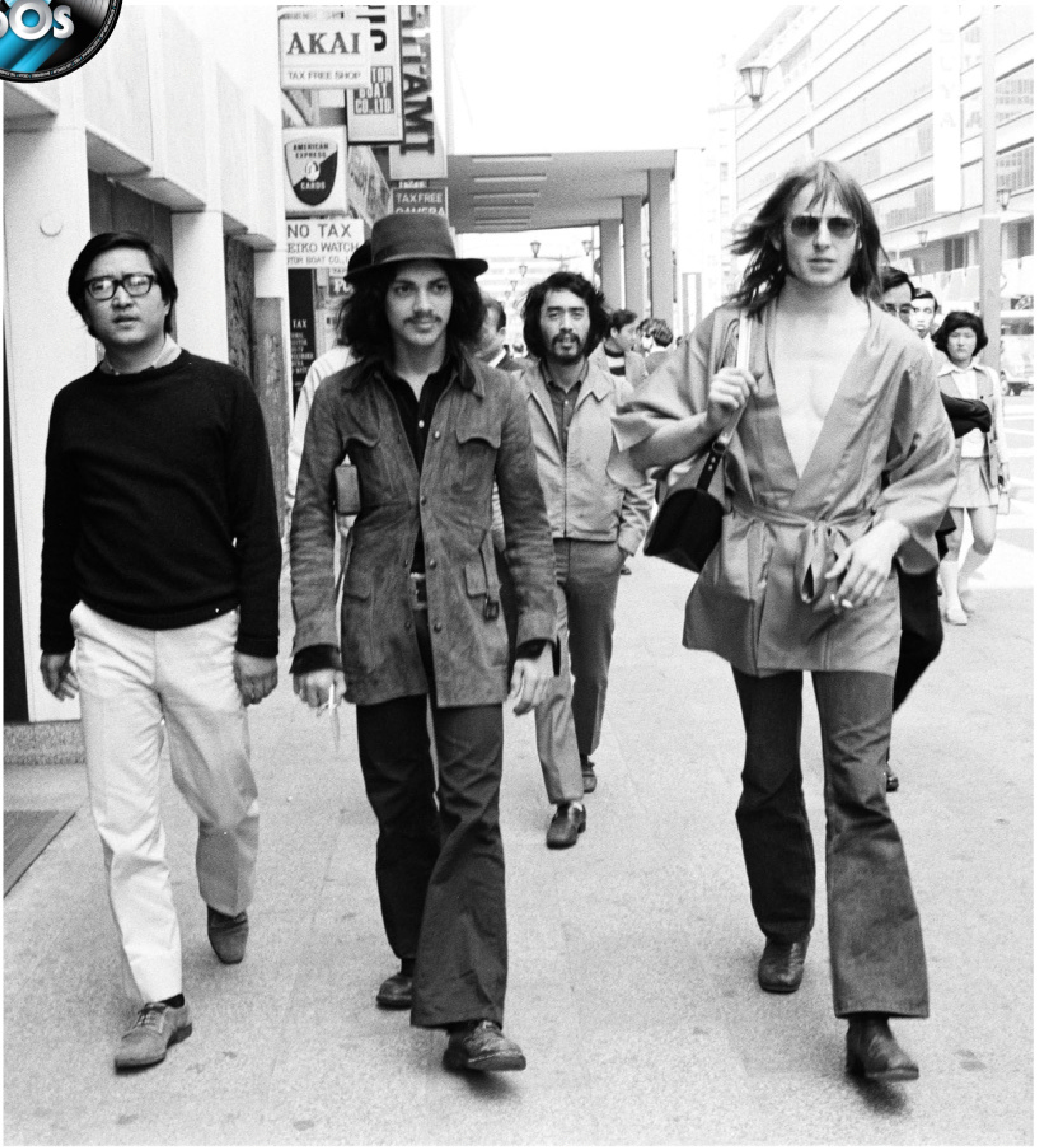
They were and they didn't. Not yet, anyway.

Because of the delayed timing of the release of that debut album, *Tons Of Sobs*, which came out in March 1969, several months after they had recorded it the previous year, its ▷

Killer track: ***Walk In My Shadow***

PHOTOSHOT/AVALON

"The first night we got together to audition each other, we knew we had it."
Andy Fraser



eventual arrival is often mistakenly seen as an early shot across the musical bow from the same wave of British 'heavy rock' acts that would come to define the late 60s and early 70s. But while *Tons Of Sobs* bore the same guitar/bass/drums/keyboards configuration as early Zeppelin and Sabbath, Purple and Heep, along with the same emphasis on star-dusted soul-power lead vocals, Free – as both Rodgers and Fraser were always keen to point out – were more influenced by Gladys Knight than by Genghis Khan.

"We weren't really aware of bands like Black Sabbath," Fraser told me. "Our contemporaries were people like Traffic, Jethro Tull… Spooky Tooth was around at that time. We looked up to Cream and Hendrix. But mainly we were influenced by black American performers like BB King and Aretha Franklin and Gladys Knight. Those sorts of people were really what we were listening to."

Simon Kirke recalled the nights when they would all congregate in Fraser's bedroom at his mum's house in Roehampton and listen to whatever new records they'd bought that week. "We brought round albums that we thought the others would like. Andy had a really nice stereo system in his room."

They would draw the curtains and place a scarf over a lamp to dim and colour the light, and just nod along.

"We listened to Motown, Otis Redding; I believe we even listened to a bit of Mozart once!" Kirke continued. "It was just bouncing what we liked off the other three people. And I really believe that cemented us as musical brothers. It wasn't strictly blues-slash-rock, there were always other elements involved."

On stage these other elements would be given full reign.

"We got a lot of work in clubs and colleges, places like that," Rodgers recalled. "We went down really well straight away, starting out with a lot of covers but bringing our own thing to them. Things like *The Hunter*, which we knew from the Albert King album *Born Under A Bad Sign*, which everyone in London seemed to have a copy of. The original was brilliant but quite short. We would jam on that and it would end up twice as long and twice as sort of… big. The same with something like *Goin' Down Slow*, which absolutely everyone had done, from Howlin' Wolf to BB King, Aretha Franklin, even Dave Graham. The Animals was probably the version I first heard. That one was long, over six minutes, something like that. In Free we'd be jamming away on it for ten minutes sometimes. It was just one of those great slow-burners that we kind of specialised in."

Rising in the East: Fraser and Kirke on an early Free trip to Japan.

> *"We didn't release a single from that first album. We were that good we didn't think we needed to."*
> *Andy Fraser*

After that, said Fraser, "we gradually started bringing our own stuff into the set. You had to write your own stuff to get a record deal. Also, I never saw us as just blues-rock. Every time someone we considered important released a new album, whether it was the Stones or The Beatles or The Who, we would sit and listen. We'd be like: 'Wow! We can do that!' It was a fantastic learning period. A sense of competitiveness, and that we could do that too, maybe even better."

Rodgers and Fraser quickly emerged as the main songwriters in Free, although there would be two full band compositions listed on *Tons Of Sobs*, one of which, *Walk In My Shadow*, would become a cornerstone track for the band. Badass night stalker guitar riff, push-you-around drums, tall-walking bass, strutting vocals full of sexual menace, words like thin ice down your back: *'When I get you in the shadow/I'm gonna give you what's in store…'*

The other band composition destined for *Tons Of Sobs* was *Moonshine*, a glacially paced, monumental, blues-as-devil's-

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music opus; the kind of thing Black Sabbath would later build an entire career out of, but which for Free represented merely the outer perimeters of where they were planning to take their music. When they performed it live, *Moonshine* would take on biblical proportions, like a snake crawling on its belly, even slower than on record, entwined about your neck, Kossoff's guitar-throttling solo stretching the whole haunting experience out to deep infinity, seven minutes, eight, nine…

"We would jam on BB King, Robert Johnson, and songs like *Walk In My Shadow* would kind of emerge from that," said Rodgers. It was Kossoff who had the beginnings of *Moonshine* and Rodgers who completed it. "We were looking at who was making it on the scene, and it was bands like Jethro Tull, Cream… The key factor seemed to be that they were writing their own songs. Otherwise you were just another blues band. So that's what we concentrated on."

"Andy and Paul did the writing," Kirke explained, "me and Koss did our thing. But on stage we were one. I always said when the band really got it together and got flying, there was a fifth member playing with us."

Rodgers was the more prolific in those early days, though, writing mainly alone and contributing three of *Tons Of Sobs*' seven originals. "The sheer range of Paul's writing was breathtaking for a guy so young at the time," said Kirke.

Indeed it was. Which other first-time songwriter would have had the confidence to come up with something as delicately haunting as *Over The Green Hills*, the sort of cobwebbed acoustic dreamscape, sung so lightly, tenderly, barely above a whisper, that Nick Drake would later adopt like a crown of thorns. Then to follow that

> *"Mainly we were influenced by black American performers like BB King, Aretha Franklin and Gladys Knight."* Andy Fraser

Not so pleased to meet you: Kossoff, Kirke and Fraser talk to the press.

with something as head kicking as *Worry*: deranged guitars, warning-light vocals, tribal, breast-beating, undeniable.

Or, best of all, the sex on a stick that is *Sweet Tooth*. Where Zeppelin, who recorded their debut album at exactly the same moment in rock space and time as Free recorded theirs, would express their ferocious way-down-inside sexuality with hammer blows of sound and screaming-jet vocals, Free exuded an even more fecund sense of musical bed-creaking by laying back just a touch, the band pumping but cool, Rodgers's vocal almost offhand, the difference between a mature shag and an adolescent fumble.

"We'd listen to Zeppelin," said Fraser, "who were somewhat like us, coming from the blues into rock but with lots of other influences, and we'd go: yeah, really, really good musicians, but some of their songs weren't as good as their quality of musicianship. Robert Plant would be screaming away and we'd be like: 'Couldn't he think of some lyrics?'"

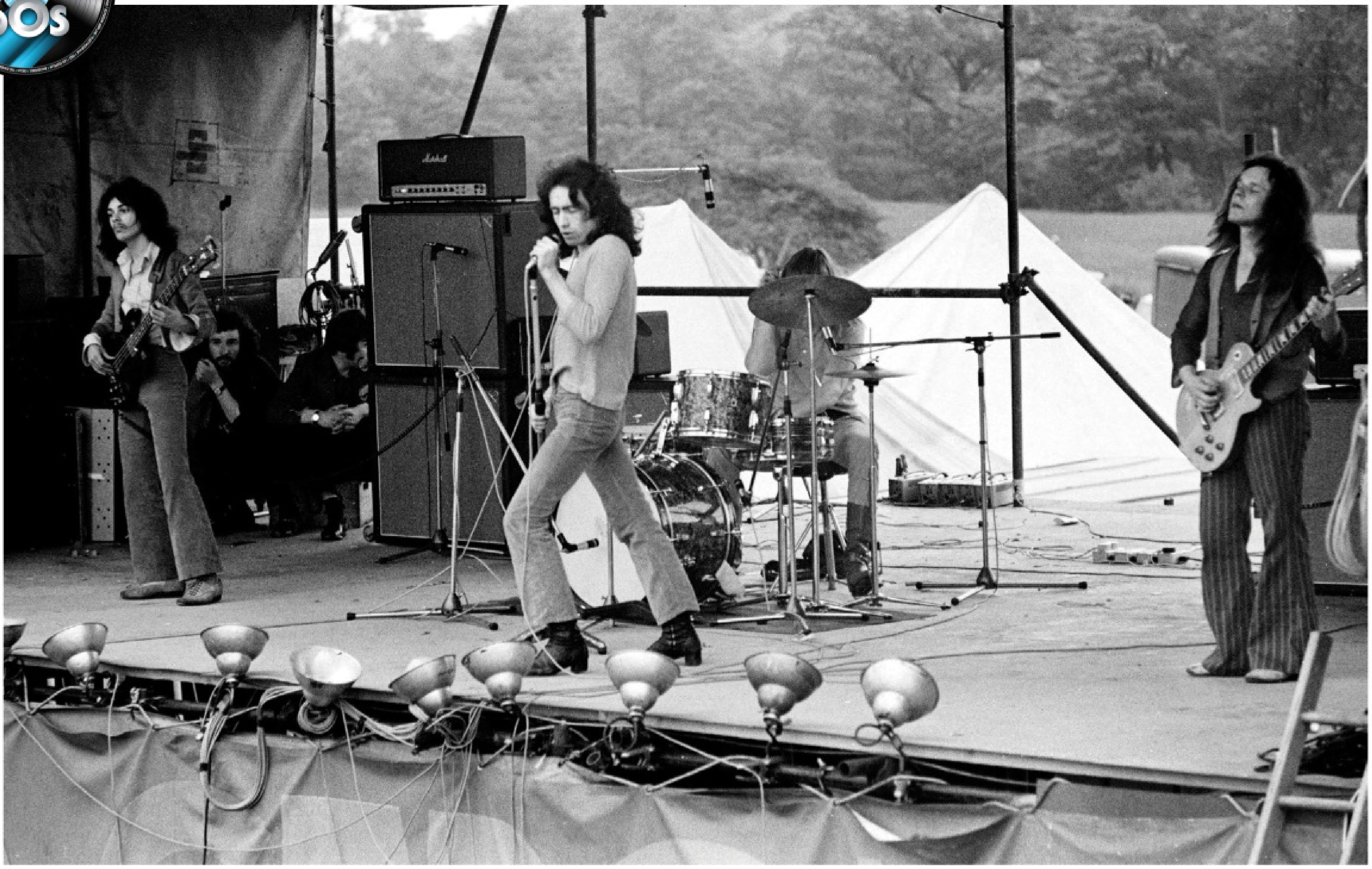
Paul Rodgers, who would form The Firm with Jimmy Page many years and lifetimes later, also played a minor role in the formation of Zeppelin.

"I actually met Robert just before he joined Zep." That was at early Free show in Birmingham, opening for Alexis Korner at the Railway Tavern, a blues club underneath the railways arches. "Robert got up to jam with Alexis and he was the Robert Plant that we know and love today – full-on hair and tight jeans and everything, but without Led Zeppelin. He was giving it large with Alexis, who was playing an acoustic guitar, and people didn't quite get it. You know, he was doing that 'Hey babe!' [imitates Plant's hysterical vocal]. Full-on everything, you know?

"We were staying at some hotel, and he came back for a cup of tea, and he said: 'You know, I'm thinking of going down to London. What's it like down there?' I said: 'Oh, it's pretty cool, you know. It's good.' He said: 'I've had a call from this guy called Jimmy Page. Have you heard of him?' I said: 'Oh yeah, everyone's talking about him. He's a big session guy down there.' He said: 'Well he wants to form a band with me. They've offered me either thirty quid or a percentage.' I said: 'Take the percentage.' Next thing I knew was there was this new group called Led Zeppelin ,with Robert in it. Their album was in the charts and ours wasn't. I thought: 'Hmmm…'"

The key creative partnership in Free was the one between Rodgers and Fraser. "Although we didn't have much in common as people, we really clicked as songwriters together," Fraser would tell me. Early on, in fact, the perception was that it was Fraser's group.

"Yeah," he shrugged, "but I think that may have really hurt Kossoff. His original plan was to get a singer like Paul and kind of do a Rod Stewart-Jeff Beck-type thing. And they went through a lot of bass ▷



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> *"The whole recording process behind Tons Of Sobs added up probably only took us a few hours."*
> **Simon Kirke**

players that didn't work before I came along. But suddenly we turned this corner, and I think it was difficult for Koss. But there was no ulterior motive for me, I just did what was natural."

Andy liked to push things as far as they could go though, musically.

"Yeah, and in life in general, I suppose."

Indeed it was the Fraser-Rodgers axis that came to define the creative – and business – flywheel of Free. Together they would write almost all of the material on the band's seminal albums. The first green shoots of that songwriting partnership were there on *Tons Of Sobs* on the tracks *Wild Indian Woman* and, especially, *I'm A Mover*. The former was a funky, made-in-the-shade groover, and spoke of Rodgers's fascination with the American West of the 19th century, a theme that would resurface throughout his career, most notably five years into the future when he wrote a song called *Bad Company*. The latter is simply one of those sidewinding Free masterpieces that many would try to emulate but none would manage it, because it is so bonded by the blood of the four young stags that kicked it up out of the dust. Mountainous funk bass, octopus-armed drums, searing, scolding guitar, and upfront those crack-in-the-sky vocals.

"Me and Andy just clicked as songwriters together," said Rodgers. "It started with him arranging some of the songs I'd sketched out, then becoming more involved until we just sat down and worked together. It was really great – while it lasted."

"Paul was really good on lyrics and coming up with a vocal melody, and my strength was structuring everything," said Fraser. "I never really thought of myself as just a bass player. I started on piano and went to guitar. Then in Free I thought of myself as more of an all-round musician, sort of songwriter, arranger… My intention was to make the whole thing work. The last thing I had to worry about was the bass."

Even on stage it was Fraser, not Kossoff who became the cool-as-fuck visual foil for Rodgers's gonna-getcha frontman prowl. While Koss would be gurning furiously as he squeezed the magic juice out of his Les Paul, although his body language spoke of a tortured figure more at ease hanging back by his amp, Fraser would be merrily swaying back and forth, from side to side, a pork-pie hat tilted back on his head, skinny legs spread wide as he dexterously ploughed his fingers and his soul into that deep-throated bass.

It was from playing live that Free quickly established a reputation as the hottest new band in England.

"Andy was a very confident, amazing little guy," recalled Simon Kirke, "At the same time, he wasn't the easiest bloke to get along with. I'm not going to sugar-coat it, he could be a royal pain the arse. I think growing up the son of a mixed-race couple it was very hard, and he developed this shell of toughness around him, even though he was quite a small guy."

It was this inner steel that helped the band steer the ship through the complexities of getting their first record deal. Several A&R types had been to see Free play and dug what they did, but with no obvious hits in their set no one was ready yet to commit to signing them.

Enter again their knight in greasy kaftan, Alexis Korner, who persuaded Island Records owner Chris Blackwell to throw his hat into the ring by telling him that Free were going to be "the last great band to come out of the sixties".

Known for his patience with out-there young recording artists, and recently converted to the idea of turning his label – what had ostensibly been an outlet for his passion for Jamaican reggae – into a more rock-friendly environment, Blackwell bit.

Rodgers recalled how at their first meeting with the Island supremo he forced the rest of the band to bring "a couple of big cigars, [then] sat there smoking them

– trying to look grown up". Island, situated in a couple of rooms over a shop on Oxford Street, offered them an all-encompassing label, publishing and management contract that came with a £10,000 advance – approximately £168,000 in today's money. There was just one condition: they would have to change their name – to the Heavy Metal Kids.

Already pissed off after Island label manager and ex-Spencer Davis Group bassist Muff Winwood chided them for being "pretty boys", Rodgers was ready to walk away from the deal there and then. "We're the best fucking band in the world!" he yelled at the hapless Winwood.

Fortunately, Fraser's cooler head saved the day.

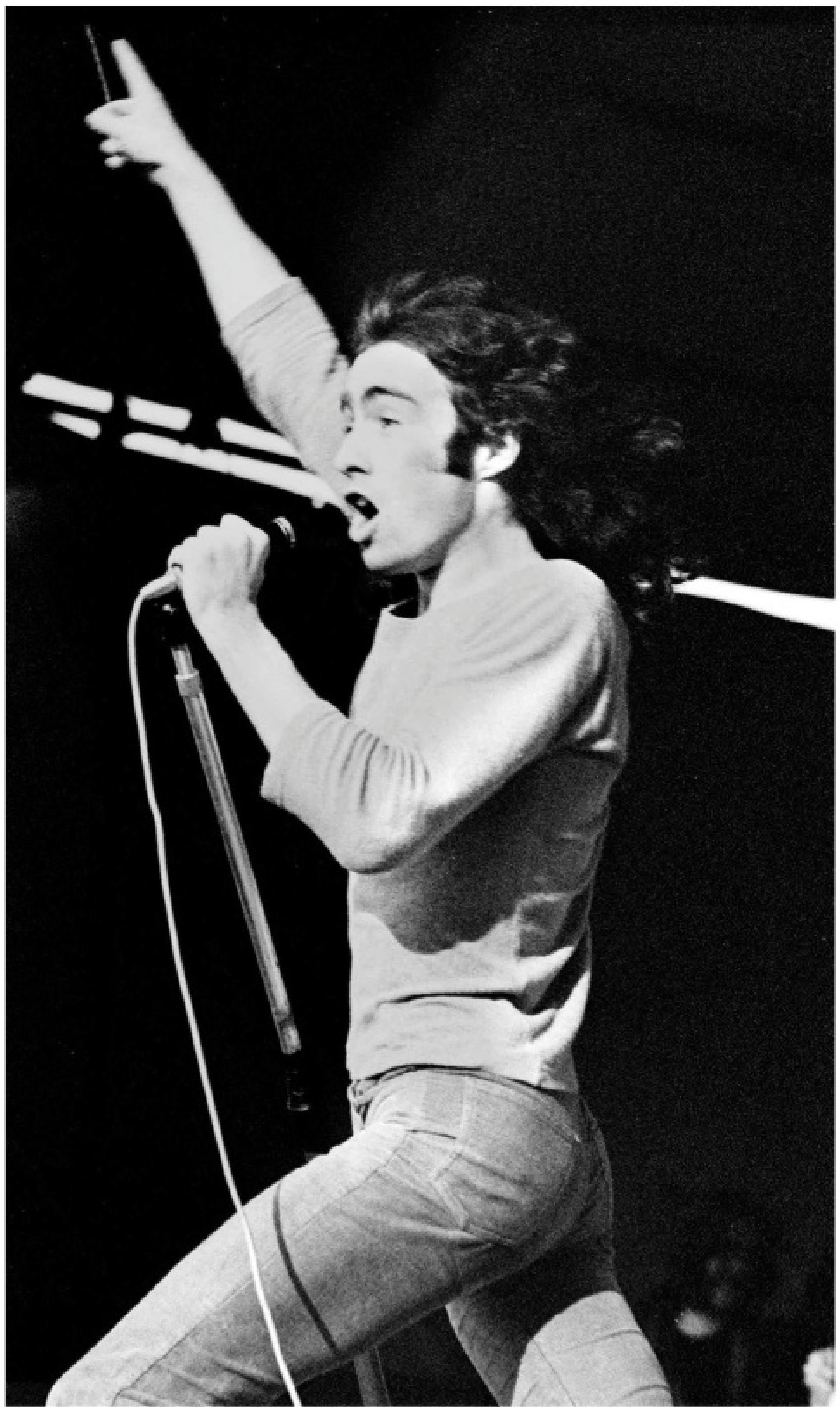
"We were glad obviously to have a record deal," Fraser later told me, "but even there we didn't take any shit. When Chris Blackwell phoned and said he wanted us to change our name from Free to the Heavy Metal Kids we were like, 'What?' But we stuck up two mock-up posters of the names at my mum's house – Free on one side, Heavy Metal Kids on the other, looked at them and went: 'Naw, it's Free.' I phoned Blackwell and told him and he said: 'Well, if it's not the Heavy Metal Kids, Island may not be interested.' I slammed down the phone. Five minutes later he called back and said: 'You win.' We had a great relationship after that."

With the sessions produced by music biz legend Guy Stevens, material for their debut album, already titled *Tons Of Sobs*, was recorded on an ad-hoc basis, on their way home from gigs or whenever they had a few hours to spare. "We never stopped working," Kirke remembered. "We were out gigging practically every night of the week. It wasn't like we were given time to be in a studio for a few weeks, I think we just recorded our stage set, basically, played as-live in the studio. The whole recording process behind *Tons Of Sobs* added up probably only took us a few hours."

Rodgers and Kossoff also forged a stronger musical bond in the studio. Koss would wait for Paul to finish his vocals before adding his guitar because, he said, he liked to work around the voice. "No one can sing like Paul Rodgers. I can't think of anyone emotionally of such depth."

For Rodgers this was an exceptional relationship. "I've worked with some of the greatest guitar players over the years – Brian May, Jimmy Page – and they were all brilliant and special. But I never had the same rapport with any of them that I had with Paul Kossoff."

Touring in a Morris van with Kossoff at the wheel (he was the only one who had a driver's license), Fraser and Rodgers essentially self-managed the band's affairs. After each gig, Fraser and a roadie would do to the production office to collect their fee – in cash. But these were the Wild West



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"If I could have sung like Paul Rodgers I would probably have stuck with being a rock musician."

Former PM Tony Blair

days of the rock biz, and more often than not whoever the club manager or local promoter was would try to con what they saw as "just a bunch of kids". As Fraser told me: "There were lots of times when we nearly had a fight on our hands. Luckily that's where Paul came in. None of us were tall, except for Simon, but you did not want to get on the bad side of Paul Rodgers. He'd look at these guys with that hard-as-nails northern attitude and tell them: 'Fucking give us the money – or else. And they would back down every time."

Sales of *Tons Of Sobs* were steady but unspectacular. In total it would sell barely 20,000 copies over the following year. But as Simon Kirke points out, "that was enough in those days. Unlike now, record companies routinely gave you four or five albums to find your feet."

But while sales of the album were underwhelming, Free's reputation as the hottest new band in England was quickly established. "Free is the group to replace the Stones," bugled *Melody Maker*, adding that Rodgers "with his silver flared pants and tight red sweater is just the part to set the girls screaming".

In truth, it was mainly the fellas who were doing the swooning. When Free arrived for their first US tour, in July 1969, opening for Blind Faith, Eric Clapton stood at the side of stage at Ungano's club in New York and looked on intently. Later, in the dressing room, he asked Kossoff to show him his vibrato technique. "You must be joking!" an incredulous Koss told him. Convinced that Clapton was "taking the piss", he blanked him. But Clapton was serious he wasn't, and suggested they swap guitars. Thus in one stroke Paul Kossoff was received into the pantheon of all-time great British guitarists.

It was the same for all of Free. Paul Rodgers was instantly acclaimed as the best new voice of his generation – a title he still holds half a century later. As future Prime Minister Tony Blair recalled when he chose Free's *Wishing Well* as one of his favourite tracks on *Desert Island Discs*: "Paul Rodgers was the man whose voice I most wanted to emulate. If I could have sung like that I would probably have stuck with being a rock musician."

Andy Fraser and Simon Kirke, meanwhile, were rightly considered the equal of, if not better than, other supremely 'tight' rhythm sections of the day. Move over, Entwistle and Moon, Jones and Bonham, Wyman and Watts, let Andy and Simon take over.

Sadly, as we now know, Free didn't last long enough to fulfil their true potential. A simple case of too much too soon, perhaps, but the years of huge success followed by painful splits, drugs, internal turmoil, short-lived re-formations and confusion, tarnished the name.

As Andy Fraser pointed out to me not long before he died in 2015 at the age of 62: "Every group and every record company wants to keep things moving to the next level, so that applied to us too. But I felt we also incorporated soul and Motown and Beatles-type of songwriting. And I think we could have pulled from all those areas and really, really opened some doors, not just remained… I mean, Zeppelin were of a certain thing. Bad Company, again, a good rock band, were of a certain rock genre. They wouldn't step to the left or right of that particular mode of doing things, though. I felt Free did have the potential [to do that] and we didn't realise it."

The legend would only grow as the years flew by and the sobs came in their tons. Ask the Faces, Thin Lizzy, Joe Bonamassa, Nazareth, Whitesnake, Tommy Bolin, Glenn Hughes, Neal Schon, Iron Maiden, Ronnie James Dio, Lynyrd Skynyrd, UFO, Little Feat, Average White Band, Gary Moore… Actually, just ask anybody.

Led Zeppelin: their debut album was the band at their rawest.

LED ZEPPELIN

LED ZEPPELIN

Atlantic, 1968

4

Yes *Led Zeppelin II* has some very big hitters, but the smart money has to be on Page, Plant, Jones and Bonham's incendiary debut. Okay, so from today's perspective there's nothing especially obscure about anything Zeppelin did in the 60s – this record has colossal songs that have continued to feature on compilations and non-Zeppelin soundtracks alike. But *Led Zeppelin* captured a vital air of wildness that was largely streamlined into the fatter hooks that spearheaded their subsequent triumphs. *Communication Breakdown* was a jerky, breakneck-speed piece of proto-metal, the comparatively lesser-sung likes of *Your Time Is Gonna Come* showed their swooping balladic side, and, hell, *Dazed And Confused*? That track was such a weird yet majestic masterpiece of warped blues rock we sometimes forget now that it didn't appear at a later point in their career. Overall this was Zeppelin at their rawest, joining the likes of Hendrix in doing freaky, rocky things to the blues – and turning it into a huge, world-conquering entity.

Rolling Stone gave the album a kicking at the time (claiming that others like Cream and the Jeff Beck Group had already covered this ground, and done it better), but other critics were more positive, and it fared well commercially from the beginning. **PG**

Killer track: *Dazed And Confused*

LET IT BLEED

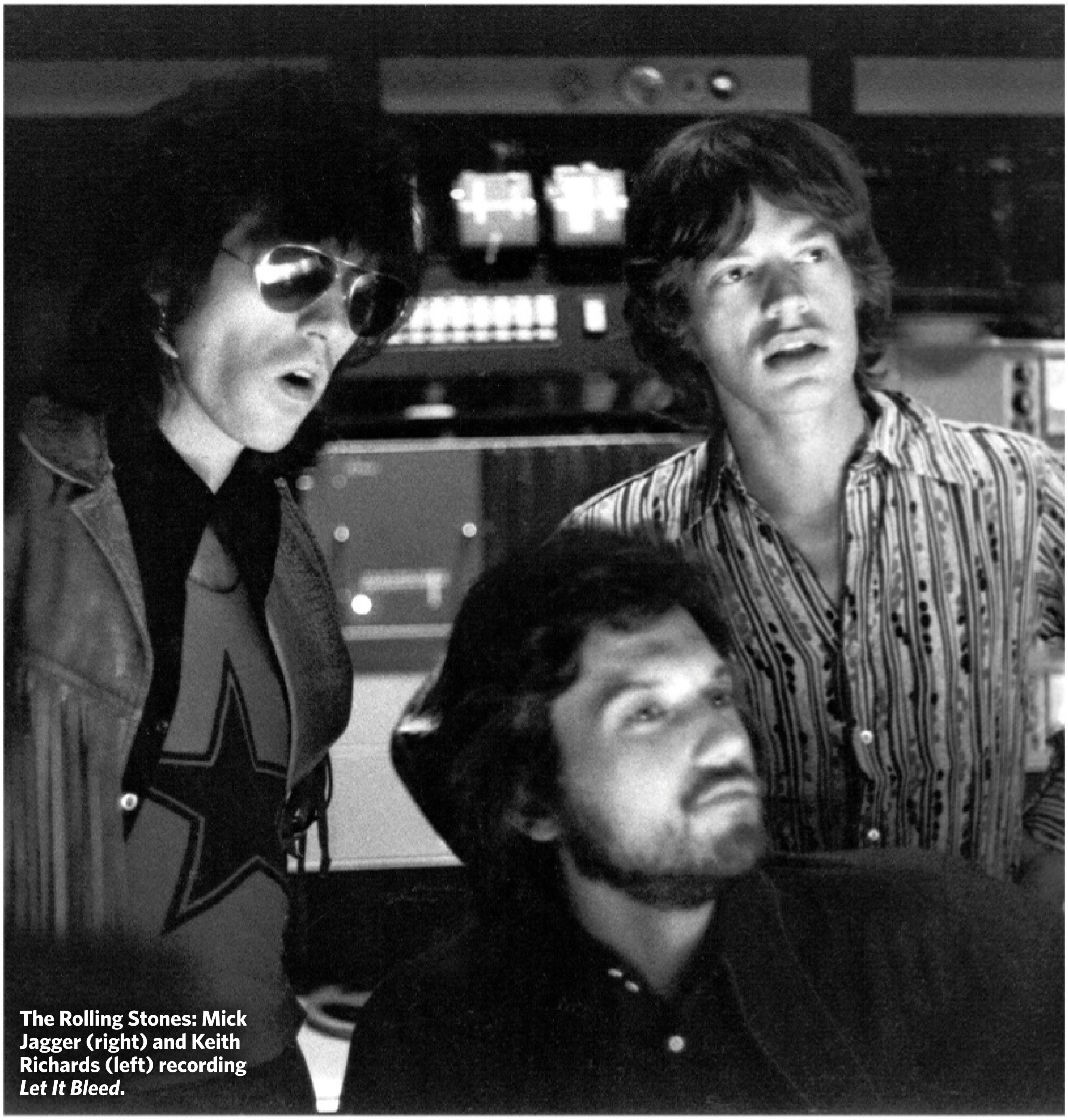
ROLLING STONES

Decca, 1969

3

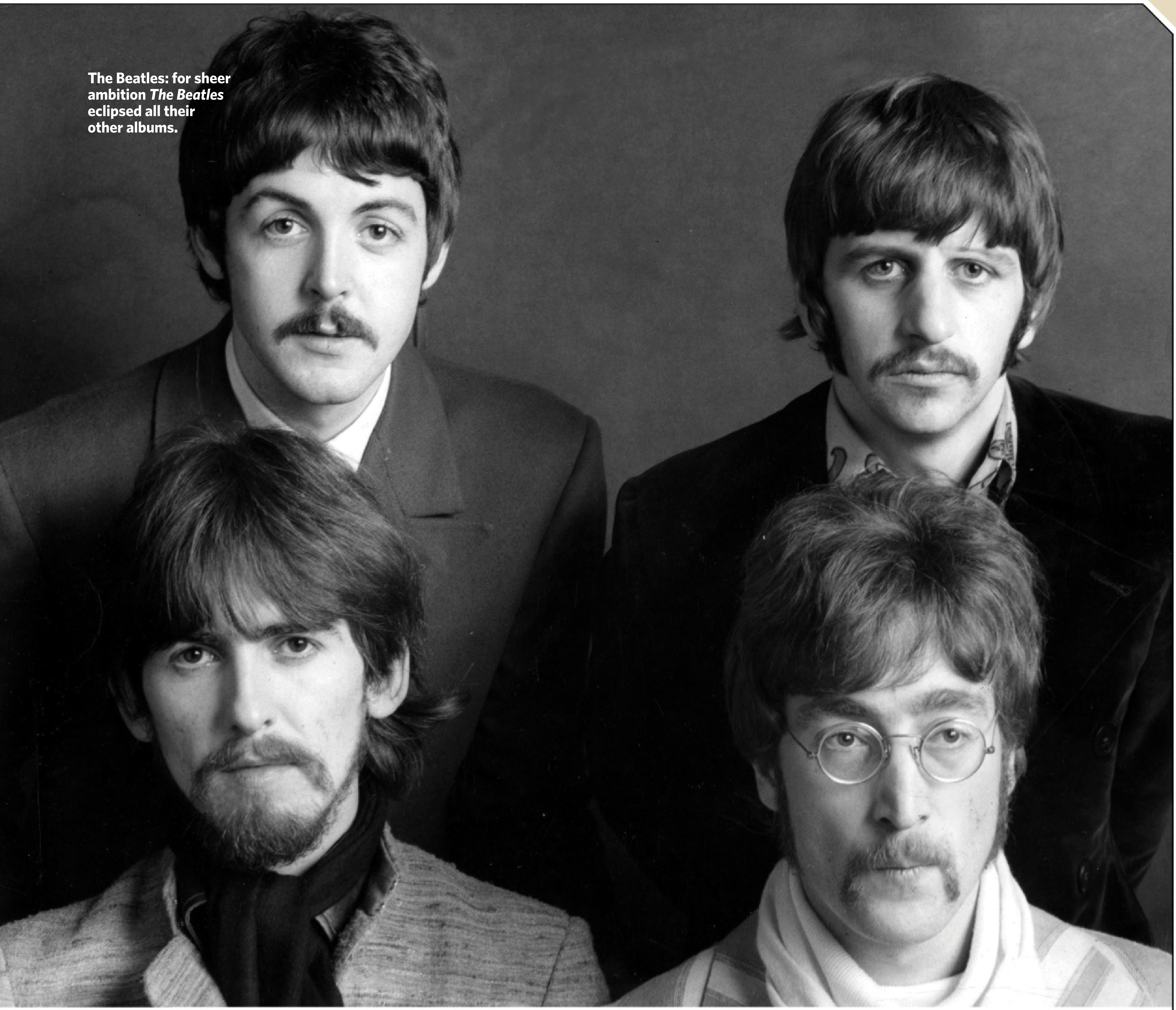
Beggars Banquet?, you say. It's a tough call, but *Let It Bleed* has the edge. This pivotal eighth album marked Brian Jones's swansong – if only as a ghostly presence, adding congas to enduring psychodrama set-piece *Midnight Rambler*, autoharp to Keith's debut lead vocal *You Got The Silver* – and 19-year old Mayall prodigy Mick Taylor's first appearance, getting among it on the swaggering, lascivious *Live With Me*, prettying up *Country Honk* with tasteful shades of slide – and found a band, ravenous for creativity, stretching out in all directions. *Bleed* captured the mood of its time perfectly, bookending its brilliance with *Gimme Shelter* (ripe with foreboding, Merry Clayton's staggering vocal solo unleashed a Vietnam firefight into every home with a hi-fi, evoking simmering city streets where rape, murder were just a shot away) and the world-weary, fin de siecle, smack-scape of *You Can't Always Get What You Want* which climaxed in a huge choral crescendo to die for. *Let It Bleed* painted 1969's Stones as a band that didn't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blew, and sealed their destiny as the world's greatest. **IF**

Killer track: *Gimme Shelter*



The Rolling Stones: Mick Jagger (right) and Keith Richards (left) recording *Let It Bleed*.

GETTY X2



The Beatles: for sheer ambition *The Beatles* eclipsed all their other albums.

2 THE BEATLES

THE BEATLES

Apple, 1968

It became the White Album because both band and fans were almost embarrassed to mouth the starkness of the proper title of this double album, which came in a 'The Beatles'-embossed plain, none-more-white sleeve designed by Pop-art guru Richard Hamilton. This was the shock of the new, yet at a time of political turmoil The Beatles beat a retreat into a hermetically sealed world.

Of the double album's 30 tracks only 14 featured all four band members playing together, while songs careered wildly from the sonic assault of Paul McCartney's *Back In The U.S.S.R.* and *Helter Skelter,* to his vaudevillian kitsch with *Wild Honey Pie* and *Martha My Dear,* and the faux country shaggy-dog story *Rocky Raccoon.* Lennon added darker textures; *Happiness Is A Warm Gun* and *Everybody's Got Something To Hide Except Me And My Monkey* contained veiled heroin references, while *Revolution 1* implied that he wouldn't be a martyr for anarchy, preferring the avant-garde direction of *Revolution 9.* The latter, The Beatles' most extraordinary 8.22 minutes, a dizzying collage of tape loops, spoken effects, screaming and mumbling divided opinion. *She Loves You* it was not. No more Fabs.

George Harrison's contributions, meanwhile, ranged from the beatific *While My Guitar Gently Weeps* (featuring Eric Clapton on guitar) and the mystic *Long, Long, Long,* to the Orwellian nightmare *Piggies* and the underrated chocolate-box experimentalism of *Savoy Truffle.* Ringo Starr's resurrected 1962 hillbilly song *Don't Pass Me By* and the George Martin-orchestrated lullaby *Good Night* – the album's natural closer – were typically downbeat. Producer Martin added the Mike Sammes Singers, who had previously appeared on *I Am The Walrus.*

For sheer ambition *The Beatles* eclipsed all their others, to the extent that it has been hailed by some as the greatest album ever made. It was also the sound of imminent break-up – the White Album that took them ever closer to the black hole. **MB**

Killer track: *Yer Blues*

ALAMY

1 AXIS: BOLD AS LOVE

THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

Track, 1967

It had to be this. Really, if we're talking about the perfect mix of overlooked masterpiece and star quality, then it's got to be Hendrix and the Experience's second album. *Axis: Bold As Love* is both the connoisseur's top choice and one of the best records of the decade full stop.

Where their debut *Are You Experienced* was about introducing Jimi the guitar hero, *Axis* was about Jimi the visionary. This was the first time he showed himself as someone who could do more than just play and perform really well. Everyone knew he could write hits, looked amazing and fused old blues traits with not-of-this-world hoodoo, but on *Axis* he was able to put the full Technicolor scope of that vivid outlook on record.

It was an unabashedly looser, freakier work than *Are You Experienced* (and follow-up *Electric Ladyland*). It was also a good deal more varied, packing greater psychedelic ambition, emotional depth and a smarter, subtler kind of sex appeal. From that wonderfully weird spoken-word beginning, Hendrix, drummer Mitch Mitchell and bassist Noel Redding take you through the jazzy psych of *Up From The Skies*, the sunnier, sweet-60s likes of *Wait Until Tomorrow*, the all-out rock trip of *If 6 Was 9*, with Mitchell's tricksy drum fills and Redding's flowing bass lines providing the perfect undercurrent for this superior brand of musical head fuck, and the hooky jam *You Got Me Floatin'*. It's the Hendrix record that best lends itself to being played all the way through in luxuriant start-to-finish listens.

Perhaps it's because of its more flagrantly hippie-ish quality that people forget what stone-cold classics this record contains. Take *Spanish Castle Magic*. Musically it's *Foxy Lady*'s devastatingly cool, street-wise elder brother, but it enters a whole other realm with such lines of trippy brilliance as *'It takes about half a day to get there if we travel by my dragonfly'*. There's *Castles Made Of Sand*, in which Hendrix alluded to his tumultuous childhood family life. And of course there's *Little Wing*, one of the best songs Hendrix ever wrote – some would say *the* best.

Of everything Hendrix recorded in his tragically short lifetime, it's *Axis: Bold As Love* that most comprehensively encapsulates his sense of freedom and adventure – the true spirit of the 60s. And for that it deserves to come out on top. **PG**

Killer track: *Little Wing*

Out Of This World

Fuelled by "acid, aliens and fearless innovation", the **Jimi Hendrix Experience**'s dazzling second album here gets the recognition it deserves.

Words: **Henry Yates**

Are You Experienced was the rough-diamond debut. *Electric Ladyland* was the sporadically brilliant swansong. But Jimi Hendrix arguably never laid down a more ambitious or out-there collection of tracks than on his eternally underrated second album. To use the parlance of the Summer of Love, 1967's *Axis: Bold As Love* was a trip, its mind-expanding material fuelled by acid, aliens and fearless innovation. Consider this your cosmic road map through the stories and secrets of each of its tracks.

EXP

With Mitch Mitchell and Hendrix in character as a radio interviewer and laid-back alien respectively, it's easy to dismiss this *Axis* amuse-bouche as cosmic babble and white noise. But this apparently throwaway moment gave vital pointers to the guitarist's head-space and the album to come. The intergalactic skit nodded to the sci-fi obsession that producer Chas Chandler had awoken ("When Jimi moved to England he started reading those books"), the choice of 'Paul Caruso' for Hendrix's UFO alter ego was a salute to a musician friend from New York's East Village, while the wild panning and shifting tape speeds announced that *Axis* would push the sonic envelope. As for the track's pig-squealing cacophony, bassist Noel Redding recalled that "myself and [Hendrix] actually put the guitars on the ground and started kicking them… and we got this amazing feedback."

UP FROM THE SKIES

When Hendrix spoke of leaving behind the "loud, brash, frustrated and rebellious" vibe of *Are You Experienced* and seeking to "cool everything down" with *Axis*, he was doubtless referring to this jazzy opener. Borrowing the post-apocalyptic themes from the first sci-fi novel loaned to him by Chandler, George R Stewart's *Earth Abides*, Jimi sings in character as an alien surveying a ravaged planet, but never sounds too ruffled: *'Maybe it's just a change of climate/Well, I can dig it, baby'*). Underneath him, Mitchell's swinging brushwork was the perfect counterpoint, the drummer benefitting from engineer Eddie Kramer's latest studio techniques. "One of the innovations that we made on *Axis*," Kramer explained, "was that instead of the drums being recorded on one track in mono, it's now stereo, so Mitch has a better shout."

SPANISH CASTLE MAGIC

There was perhaps a pang of homesickness beneath *Spanish Castle Magic*'s gunshot staccato riffs. The titular Spanish Castle, opened in 1931, with architecture modelled on a Moorish fortress, was a gaudy roadhouse that lay between the city limits of Seattle and Tacoma – a tactical move that allowed the owners to dodge local nightclub laws, albeit at the cost of convenience (Jimi's lyric notes that *'It's very far away, it takes about a half a day to get there'*). By 1959, Seattle DJ Pat O'Day began booking bands, and recalled a teenage Hendrix begging to sit in: "He would bring his Gibson amplifier with him. People were always blowing amplifiers back then and Jimi's deal was, it was his amp, he got to play on stage."

WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW

Late on in the sessions at Olympic, the Experience captured the track that

"The connoisseur's top choice, and one of the best records of the decade full stop.'

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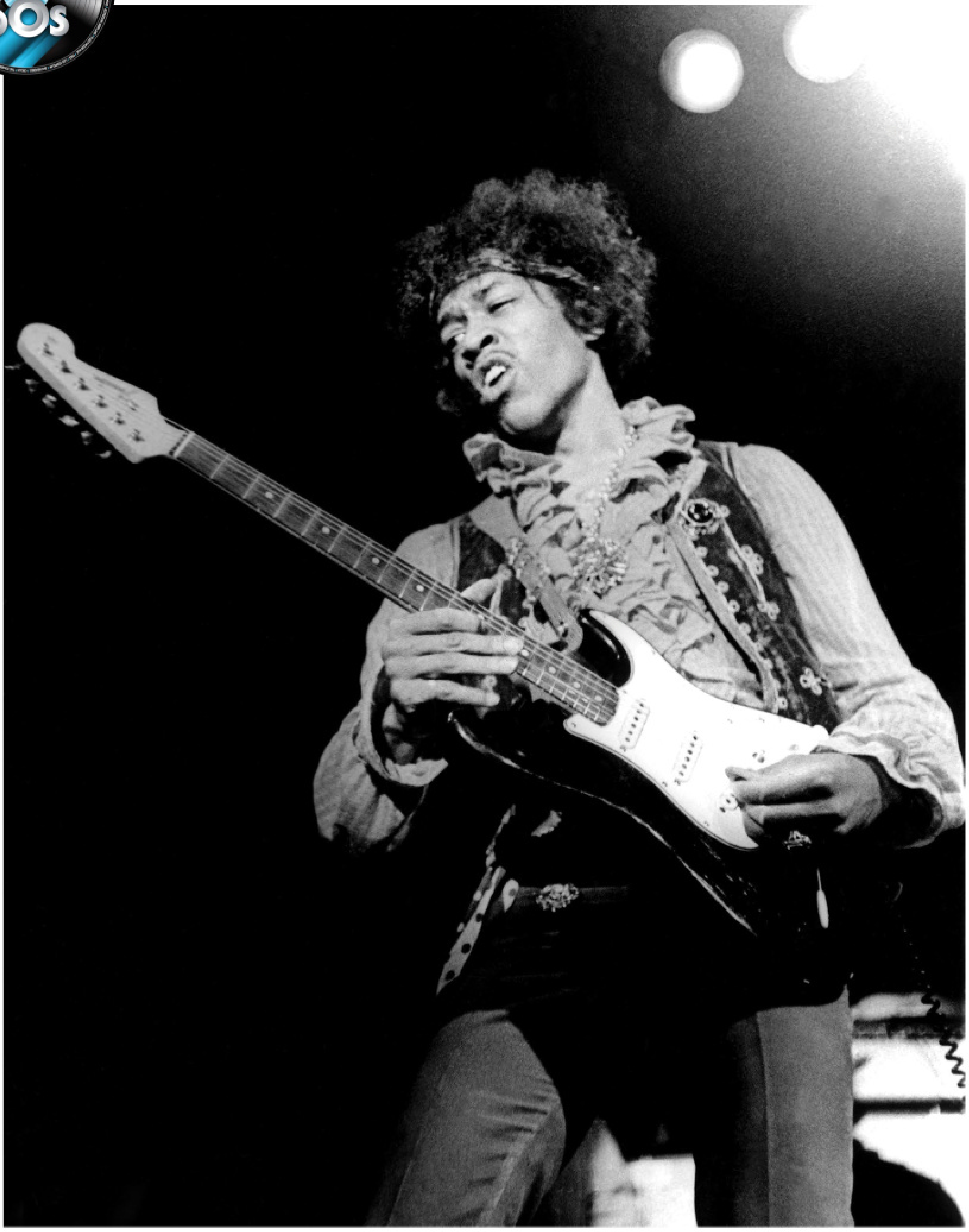

announced an undiscovered side to Hendrix's evolving songcraft. He hadn't previously explored the discipline of the first-person 'situation song', but took to it readily with this cult favourite, seemingly inspired by his early work with the Isley Brothers, with a lyric in which he plays a suitor shot dead by his girl's parents: '*Click, bang, what a hang/Your daddy just shot poor me*'). Frustratingly, *Wait Until Tomorrow* never got the single release that might have elevated it, although the song enjoyed a post-millennial boost off the back of bluesman John Mayer's souped-up live covers.

AIN'T NO TELLING

Following on the heels of *Wait Until Tomorrow*, woman trouble also pervaded this rocket-paced R&B cut (*'Oh Cleopatra, she's driving me insane'*, Jimi complains), while sonically there was more afoot than the smash-and-grab vibe would suggest. The *Axis* sessions were notable for a close collaboration with guitar-effects guru Roger Mayer – who took up residence at Olympic Studios, ready to tweak the circuitry of his creations to order – and *Ain't No Telling*'s choppy fretwork benefited from the tone-fattening Octavia pedal. "Both Jimi and I had synaesthesia," Mayer reflected, "where we would see colours in sound."

LITTLE WING

The DNA of *Axis*'s most treasured guitar moment was already present in *(My Girl) She's A Fox* by Hendrix's former R&B outfit The Icemen. But it was the loved-up vibe of the Monterey festival that prompted him to finish the lyric ("I figured that I take everything I see around and put it maybe in the form of a girl," he explained).

The glistening guitar playing, with its piano-style opposing parts, was feasible due to Hendrix's long thumb snaking over the top of his Strat neck to play bass notes, while the ethereal tone was the result of doubling his vocal with a glockenspiel, lodging his pickup selector between positions and employing a Leslie rotating speaker for a tremulous guitar tone he deemed "like jelly bread". Even so, the studio set-up was surprisingly low-fi. "The Leslie we used was a tiny, handmade thing," Kramer told *Total Guitar*, "with a little Meccano set to support it and a rubber band driving a motor."

The *Axis* album included some of the best playing Hendrix ever recorded.

IF 6 WAS 9

Later included on the *Easy Rider* soundtrack, this psychedelic blues was the 60s counterculture in excelsis, from Hendrix's pot shots at *'white collar conservatives flashing down the street'* to the likely influence of LSD (Chandler: "I didn't find out until after we finished *Axis* that he'd been taking acid"). A cameo from Graham Nash stomping his feet on the track bled into a free-form outro, with Hendrix tooting on a borrowed recorder. "So here's Jimi freaking out," Kramer recalled, "and of course I stick a lot of echo on. And the guys are stomping away like mad. It sounds like galloping horses!").

'People forget what stone-cold classics this record contains.'

But the elaborate production was almost in vain, after Hendrix left the *Axis* master tape in a taxi. Redding saved the day by supplying an early mix on an arse-rough open-reel tape, and the bassist also took credit for the outro: "When we all go into three separate time signatures, that's basically an idea of mine, because we didn't know what to do at that one point in the song."

YOU GOT ME FLOATIN'

Side Two of the vinyl *Axis* started up like a train with this R&B stomper. It's

GETTY x2

The Jimi Hendrix Experience: (l-r) Mitch Mitchell, Jimi Hendrix, Noel Redding.

ALAMY x2

'Axis encapsulates the true spirit of the 60s.'

the album's most striking example of backwards guitar, but the bandleader was happy to turn the spotlight on his studio guests, with raucous backing vocals from The Move's Trevor Burton and Roy Wood. "Roy and I walked in to say hello, because we knew them well by then," Burton recalls. "They were doing *You Got Me Floatin'*, and Noel and Mitch weren't cutting the background vocals too good, so we asked Jimi: 'Do you want us to have a go?' I think we did it in two takes. Jimi was pleased with it."

CASTLES MADE OF SAND

"It's Jimi's imagination run wild," Eddie Kramer noted of this reflective moment, where Hendrix's glistening double-stop parallel fourths set up a lyric that takes some inspiration from Frank Herbert's 1965 sci-fi novel *Dune*, while examining the transience of life. "That [song] is the story of our life," explained Jimi's younger brother, Leon Hendrix, "about my mother and father arguing, in the first verse. I'm the little Indian boy who before he was ten played war games in the woods – that's my verse. And then the last verse is about our mother. Jimi came home and said: 'This is our family song.'"

SHE'S SO FINE

Written by Redding in the *Top Of The Pops* studio in March 1967, *She's So Fine* was the first song tackled at the Axis sessions. It's also the most formulaic, rooted squarely in the British Invasion sound, with Noel Redding's vocal surveying the denizens of Swinging London ("It was about hippies," he explained. "I had seen some bloke walking about with an alarm clock around his neck, attached by a bit of string"). Famously a useful guitarist himself, Redding played rhythm, taught Hendrix the riff – and was deflated when Chandler backtracked on releasing it as a single and Jimi bumped it from the set-list. "I've got it in my diary," said Redding. "Hendrix refused to play it. It was in LA or somewhere, and in my diary it says: 'Hendrix pulled a moody…'"

ONE RAINY WISH

Supposedly revealing itself to Hendrix in a dream, *One Rainy Wish* saw the guitarist create a soundscape of backwards and octave-doubled guitars as he chased tones to match the blissed-out lyric ("I asked Jimi what it was about," recalls Roger Mayer, "and he said: 'You might be in the forest, and then you see a waterfall, and then you go on a space journey.' That's what influenced all those different sounds"). Rhythmically adventurous, the piece flipped between a 3/4 verse and 4/4 chorus, while jazz great Mike Stern flagged up Jimi's genre-crossing guitar work: "His playing has that same singing quality that I dig in Jim Hall's playing or Wes Montgomery's playing."

LITTLE MISS LOVER

Kicked off by a crisp Mitchell drum beat and showcasing Hendrix's blossoming talent with the nascent wah-wah pedal, *Little Miss Lover* was chiefly powered by the low-end thud of Redding's eight-string bass, built by the Swedish firm, Hagstrom. "I got that bass in New York," he recalled. "I was asleep in a hotel and someone said: 'Go downstairs, someone's got a bass for you'. So I went down, and I had a photograph taken outside this hotel and they gave me this bass. I've still got the photo. I'm looking very bleary – I'm in my nightshirt and a pair of funny shoes."

BOLD AS LOVE

Axis's title track was redolent of *Little Wing* in the opening measures, but the revelation came at 2:50, when Kramer unveiled the stereo phasing that he and tape operator George Chkiantz had used to treat the drums. ("When Jimi first heard that," Kramer recalled, "he fell off the couch, yelling at me: 'Oh my god, this was in my dream!'"). Rising to the occasion, for the outro Jimi played a soulful, album-best solo that climaxes with frantic tremolo picking and, according to Redding, was created on the fly: "The ending and the build-up was all spontaneous between the whole band."

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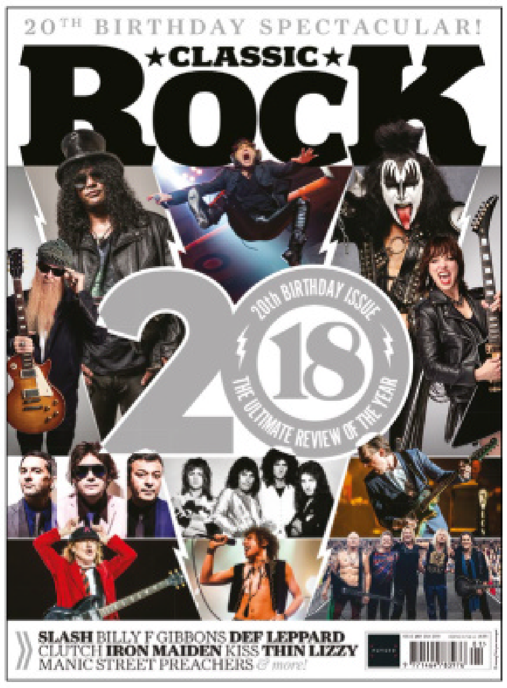

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Swervedriver

Future Ruins *ROCK ACTION*

Excellent return in dark times for 90s rockers.

When the early 1990s of pre-Britpop rock are recalled, Oxford's Swervedriver tend to be undersung, overshadowed by bands such as Radiohead and My Bloody Valentine. Which is grossly unfair. Epic, all guitars blazing tracks like *Never Lose That Feeling* were huge and galvanising, in an era often characterised by shoegazing, heavy-eyelidded neo-psychedelia. Swervedriver always sounded woozy themselves, as if concussed by the impact of their own barrages. But despite the bliss they engendered, the skies they coloured in, there was always about them an impassioned air, a determination not merely to wallow in sound.

All of which makes them the perfect group for times a good deal more troubled than the ones from which they emerged; challenging times for all, with worse-than-bleak prospects over the horizon, as the title of this album implies, but a challenge to which they more than rise here.

The title track evokes the sense of a battered craft gliding over the uncertain wastes of what is to come, all drones and fading, throbbing lights. *'We are ruled by fools/These are future ruins/That the king is insane is now old news,'* Adam Franklin diagnoses. Throughout the album, space-rock is a metaphor for global survey, historical, future and aerial perspective.

The Ascent reminds inadvertently, or perhaps advertently, of Robbie Williams's *Millennium*, into which we're now in deep. *Drone Lover* is politically punning; drones have come to mean something more ominous than mere avant-garde rock billowing. As ever with Swervedriver, however, the petroleum scent it generates is perfumed. For all the grim despondency (*'We've stumbled into the end of days where the future comes home to cry,'* groans *The Lonely Crowd Fades In The Air*), this is an album steeped in the acrid stench of beauty, as on *Spiked Flower*, pure pleasure amid the impending gloom, ecstatic, sunny bursts of guitar breaking over the tides; *Everybody's Going Somewhere And Nobody's Going Anywhere* features a spoken-word vocal, like the last, walkie-talkie testimony of a pilot whose craft is fatally holed. But resistance finally rears its head on the last track, *Radio Silent*, with its repeated plea for solidarity in the face of whatever is coming.

For all the dazed air of Swervedriver, at heart this is an unconfused, militant album, as if stumbling determinedly through clouds of tear gas. Swervedriver have been under-regarded for too long. *Future Ruins* deserves to be heard far and wide.

David Stubbs

Gary Clark Jr.

This Land *WARNER*

Inventive return from restless American bluesman.

After four years, you can't come back with a limp handshake. And on the title track of his long-awaited third album, *This Land*, Gary Clark Jr. makes one hell of an entrance. Led in by dirty guitars, hip-hop beats and *Doctor Who* sound effects, the Texan spits a seething attack at those who resent a black man making it big: *'Nigger run, nigger run, go back where you come from/Fuck you, I'm America's son/This land is mine.'*

Also his, it seems, is every genre within it. Clark has stressed his desire to operate outside route-one blues, and this album has a restless curiosity. *Feeling Like A Million* is choppy, skirt-chasing reggae. *Got To Get Up* collides New Orleans horns with New York hip-hop. Best of all, for our purposes, is the Sunset Strip sneer of *What About Us* and the punky blast of *Gotta Get Into Something*.

It doesn't always work, though. *Guitar Man* and *I Got My Eyes On You* are the kind of smooth soul that rots your teeth. But as Clark wraps up with the formulaic 12-bar of *Dirty Dishes Blues*, you realise how much the rest of the album pushes the envelope and applaud him for it.

Henry Yates

The Lemonheads

Varshons 2 *FIRE*

Evan Dando declared grunge pop's least prolific songwriter.

Nothing says 'all outta tunes' more than making a covers album, doing arse-all for 10 years and then making a sequel. We'd assumed The Lemonheads' addled supremo Evan Dando was now the house mumbler at the Dunwhingin home for grunge casualties, but *Varshons 2* finds him compos mentis enough to revisit the indiest and countriest corners of his record collection in search of more of the borrowed magic of *Mrs Robinson*, *Frank Mills* and *The Outdoor Type*.

A decade in the wilderness has only mildly withered his slick stoner croon, and there's sizzle to his take on The Bevis Frond's synth-grunge *Old Man Blank* that suggest Dando isn't quite the dead-eyed burn-out we might have thought.

That said, there's a DIY feel and bouts of slacker tomfoolery to *Varshons 2*; Lucinda Williams's *Abandoned* is laced with psych guitar wails, The GiveGoods' *Unfamiliar* is actual sci-fi reggae, and it sounds like Dando gives Natural Child's bar boogie tune *Now And Then* a surprise blow-back in the middle eight.

Dando is most confident when tackling acoustic folk obscurities, or classics that would sound fantastic even if a tone-deaf racoon played them on cowbell (*Take It Easy*; Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds' *Straight To You*). Now, these new songs of yours, Evan. We'll wait.

Mark Beaumont

Royal Trux

White Stuff *FAT POSSUM*

The victorious return of rock's sexiest fuck-ups

The biggest thrill of following these art-damaged NY/LA glamour junkies is that you never know which Trux you're gonna get. Sometimes they sound like short-circuiting vacuum cleaners, and sometimes they sound, rather magnificently, like the Rolling Stones with their brains scrambled. It depends on their mood. Or the decade.

White Stuff is Royal Trux's first album of new material in 18 years, and it dips, generously, into both ends of their career. It's got some absolute burners on deck, such as the loose-limbed, Primal Scream-y rock'n'roll rave-up *Year Of The Dog* and the spectacularly slinky, mind-bending *Purple Audacity #2*, which sounds like a Funkadelic song and a Hawkwind song playing at the same time. It's also got plenty of the noisy psychedelic horseshit they did in the early 90s, but even that stuff sounds glammy and cool. Christ, this could be their best album. I'm sure it's not supposed to be, but here we are.

Sleazegrinder

Heavy Drapes

Crashing Like Stars

CADIZ MUSIC

New-breed punks' promise fulfilled.

The death of Heavy Drapes vocalist Garry Borland days after their set at Rebellion's Amsterdam festival in June last year shocked the punk community. The firebrand frontman talked a big game, backed up with sufficient substance on stage to push the

Drapes rapidly to the forefront of the scene, and this posthumous release, completed by his surviving bandmates, fulfils his ambition to deliver a strong debut album.

Its 10 tracks pack effervescent energy and ear-worm melodies into smart arrangements, highlights such as *Make Some Trouble* and *Nightrippin'* giving punk a contemporary shake-up, and when their roots occasionally show through more conspicuously it doesn't overpower their own charisma.

A powerful tribute that should have been an opening manifesto.

Rich Davenport

Spielbergs

This Is Not The End

BY THE TIME IT GETS DARK

Norwegian indie fuzz-mongers make a play for their Hollywood ending.

This Is Not The End, by Oslo trio Spielbergs, may well be the purest distillation of indie-rock to have arrived in 2018. Drenched in layers of fuzz and featuring heartfelt, endearingly imperfect and deeply human vocals by Mads Baklian, it's steeped in the atmosphere of the mid-90s-to-early-2000s artistry of artists ranging from Pavement and Dinosaur Jr to the emotional melodicism of post-hardcore bands like Appleseed Cast or *Clarity*-era Jimmy Eat World. Add hints of a Biffy Clyro-style thirst for the anthemic on *Distant Star*, the fact that the most delicate and mournful song on the album glories in the title *McDonalds (Please Don't Fuck Up My Order)*, and the oddly comforting, everyman knowledge that they count a librarian and a kindergarten teacher among their number, and you're on to a treat for the kind of sensitive souls who remember how good emo was before it mutated into the eyeliner-and-skinny-jeans brigade.

Emma Johnston

Michael Chapman

True North POB

Enduring English singer-songwriter looks to his past.

A recording artist since his 1969 album *Rainmaker*, Michael Chapman has defied the tides of fashion like a more successful Canute, weathering every era of rock music until, eventually, each and every trend comes round to him. An influence on early-70s Bowie, the now 78-year-old Chapman's most recent collaboration was on an instrumental album with Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore. Now he returns with this solo album.

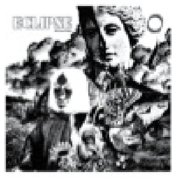
From its cover image of Chapman's parents in an old black-and-white shot, to Chapman's voice, which is a never-frail rasp, *True North* is an album steeped in the past, as songs like *Youth Is Wasted On The Young*, *It's Too Late* and the beautiful *Truck Song* present a world where time's winged chariot is not so much snapping at his heels as slowing down to offer him a lift. With contributions from Bridget St John and BJ Cole, among others, this is a beautiful record, a reflection on an extraordinary 50-year career that's more a memory of life than a memento mori.

David Quantick

The Sonic Dawn

Eclipse HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS

Trippy Danes' short, not-sweet-enough third album.



There's a lot to be said for economy of expression sometimes, and when this Copenhagen trio build up a head of steam they don't need six minutes to get us in a mind-altered mood. But more often you're left wishing they'd dig their psych grooves a little deeper, heavier and longer than the two-to-three-minute nuggets included here. Maybe it's all loyalty to their early psych inspirations, just as they've faithfully used analogue equipment to keep it cuddly and retro-sounding, but it means their softly lysergic pop rarely offers more than a glimpse of real intoxication. The Doorsy organ and dramatic timpani of *On The Edge Of Our Time* is one such alluring passage. You just wish there were more of it.

Johnny Sharp

Wille & The Bandits

Paths FAT TOAD

Bonamassa-endorsed retro-rockers with a radical edge.

The key song on Wille & The Bandits' previous album *Steal* was *1970*, which describes their ideal time and place. They were so steeped in a late hippie, West Coast ethos that it was startling to discover they were West Country boys. But singer-guitarist Wille Edwards's authenticity on slide and bottleneck is less notable among classic rock kids than his commitment to the social change the music embraced at the start of the 70s.

The album opens with two bottleneck-heavy, unusually studied pleas for peace and love in response to fascism, homelessness and the colonial legacy, while string-laden epic *Four Million Days* goes deep into a haunted mind. Bassist Matt Brooks and drummer Matt Naumann add greatly to a relatively expansive sound, although a certain dourness maybe begins with Edwards's voice, the most modern aspect here in its grungy angst. Their thoughtful ambition, allied to hard-touring independence, remains refreshing.

Nick Hasted

Unloved

Heartbreak HEAVENLY

Roadhouse blues

There's always been a delicious collision between noir and Phil Spector's wall of sound in the work of Irish producer David Holmes, whether with Noel Gallagher, Primal Scream or his *Oceans* Hollywood soundtracks.

Hooking up with singer-songwriter Jade Vincent and producer/composer/T Bone Burnett collaborator Keefus Clancia brings Holmes's cinematic visions to an evocative boil that would commit mass slaughter in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* roadhouse, tracks like *Lee* (in tribute to Mr Hazelwood), *Boy And Girl* and the haunted *If* rewiring the shimmering torch-ballad style for modern trauma, although they nod playfully at Johnny Thunders And The Heartbreakers on *Love*.

The follow-up to 2016's *Guilty Of Love*, this heart-melting exercise in widescreen evocative soul-baring brazenly sets the controls for greatness.

Kris Needs

ROUND-UP: SLEAZE

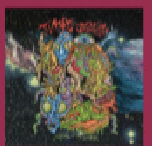
By Sleazegrinder

Timmy's Organism: a masterpiece in the messiest, most savage way possible.

Timmy's Organism

Survival Of The Fiendish

BURGER



Timmy's Organism rose from the formidable ashes of Clone Defects, one of Detroit's best-kept secrets back in the 2000s. That band was a sort of psychotic murder-city Hawkwind for the bath salts crowd, and was probably 100 years or so ahead of its time. Defect mainman Timmy Vulgar returned with this prolific behemoth a few years later.

Survival Of The Fiendish is the band's sixth album, and it's basically a masterpiece in the messiest, most savage way possible. This is not untrod territory – if you've heard the MC5, Roky Erickson and/or Spine Of God-era Monster Magnet and you've seen at least one of the *Toxic Avenger* movies, then you've got Timmy's Organism's recipe for disaster – but they do what they do so well it's like they fucking invented feedback and mutants puking green goo themselves. Do you remember how gloriously over-the-top Mudhoney's *Superfuzz BigMuff* album sounded the first time you heard it? Well Timmy's Organism makes '88 Mudhoney sound emo in comparison.

Nixon Now

The Now Sound ELEKTROHASCH

It's been 15-ish years since the last Nixon Now record, so you probably assumed these German Stooges disciples had all died or something. Turns out they just moved to Detroit for added authenticity. *The Now Sound* adds a vicious punk sneer to their psychedelic freak-out barrage, and it fits perfectly. It's the (super)sonic equivalent of a tyre fire, belching out thick clouds of deliciously toxic black smoke.

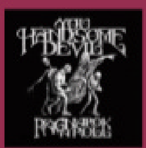
Whiskey Angel

Problems SELF-RELEASED

I dunno if the young guns in Nashville's Whiskey Angel have even heard of long-gone almost-weres Rock City Angels, but that's the kinda vibe they channel on this tasty collection of bloozy, soulful rock'n'roll. While there are moments here that you might even called 'elegant', there's just as many that are dirty, mean and nasty. A little grease on their halos, you might say.

You Handsome Devil

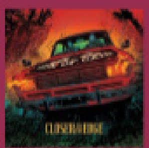
Ragnarok N' Roll SELF-RELEASED



Like a sleaze-metal Pantera, You Handsome Devil play chugging, assaultive, sludgey rock'n'roll that consistently feels like an angry finger poking you in the chest. I can only assume their shows are complete mayhem, given that I almost lost a limb just listening to this record. Winner of the pack has gotta be southern-fried stomper *I'm Too Death Metal For Summer*, for obvious reasons.

Son of Cain

Closer to the Edge SELF-RELEASED



Portuguese heavy rock duo Son Of Cain return with a towering beast of an album, all slithery, sinewy, dark, muscle-bound riff-o-rama. Imagine Glenn Danzig riding a sabre-tooth tiger through a valley of blood and bones. That's what this sounds like. It's the manliest thing I've ever heard in my life. All my hair grew back, and I just lifted a truck off the ground with my bare hands.

THE HARD STUFF ALBUMS

Long Ryders

Psychedelic Country Soul *CHERRY RED*

Spoiler alert: you get all three.

Los Angeles' Long Ryders were always a compelling band. They emerged in the early 80s as part of the 'Paisley underground' scene, a lightly psychedelic 60s garage rock revival known mostly for jangly guitars and pointy boots. The Ryders' enduring love of The Byrds and punk rock set them apart, adding both a country twang and some rough edges into the mix. Their mid-80s album *State of Our Union* is considered a classic and a pioneering example of what would eventually be known as alt.country. But the band broke up before the sound broke, leaving the likes of Uncle Tupelo and Lucero to carry the torch.

While the Long Ryders have reunited over the years for tours and festivals, their most recent studio album was more than 30 years ago. Until this one came along. There is always the chance that you've lost the plot over three decades. Not every band is up for the challenge of recapturing their old spark, but *Psychedelic Country Soul* deftly picks up where the band left off in 1987.

Still led by guitarist and singer Sid Griffin and featuring the classic 80s line-up (with harmonies courtesy of The Bangles), the band deliver a solid album full of hook-heavy power-pop reminiscent of Tom Petty and the classic twangy Americana he's known for. The ballads are a little on the syrupy side, particularly *Let It Fly* and *Make It Real*, both of which verge on the modern horrors of pop-country, but the rockers – *Greenville, Molly Somebody, All Aboard* – are some of the best things they've ever done, gritty and sweet in equal measure. *What The Eagle Sees* is an album highlight, a sort of early 80s skinny-tie redux that peels back the band's early punk roots for all to see, as is their chiming, charming cover of Petty's *Walls*. But the closing title track is the real doozy, a sprawling six-minute epic that delivers each part of the title in spades, veering from a sparse acoustic back-porch jam into a swirling kaleidoscope of spiralling guitars before settling into a harmonica-skronking rave-up. It's great stuff.

Produced by Ed Stasium (Ramones, Smithereens) and recorded at Dr Dre's studio (!), *Psychedelic Country Soul* does not show any of the creaks and cracks you might expect from a band that hasn't delivered an album in three decades. And while the more mellow moments may turn off some of the more alt fans of alt. country, most longtime fans will find this one just dandy.

Sleazegrinder

Magnum

Live At The Symphony Hall *SPV/STEAMHAMMER*

Old and new material given a live sparkle.

Magnum have released quite a few live albums, and this one is among the best of them. Recorded in their home city of Birmingham, it presents a nice balance between songs from the past decade and more familiar classics.

The band are tight and passionate, while Bob Catley's vocals cut through with febrile certainty. And it says a lot about how committed Magnum are to more recent material that tracks like *Crazy Old Mothers* and *When We Were Younger* sound as momentous as the timeless *How Far Jerusalem* or *The Spirit*. The highlight, though, is the anti-war *Don't Wake The Lion (Too Old To Die Young)*, still remarkably epic.

Malcolm Dome

Lovebites

Clockwork Immortality *JPU*

Japanese Golden God award winners return with breakneck second album.

At this year's Bloodstock Festival, Lovebites were given the kind of chance that doesn't come along too often. With Suicidal Tendencies delayed in transit, the Japanese band were bumped on to the main stage, where they proceeded to grab the opportunity with both hands. It was joy. It was fun. It was power metal in the sun. And now comes an album that doesn't quite live up to subsequent expectations.

While the Bloodstock triumph was as much down to the band's sheer force of personality as it was to their considerable musical ability, the machine-tooled precision of this second album renders them less idiosyncratic. It's ferociously well-played, but it's relentless; a 900mph blast through NWOBHM via Bay Area thrash, with frantically duelling guitars, plenty of rattling double bass-drum action, and a vocalist in Asami who, like Bruce Dickinson, understands that hitting the difficult notes is less important than delivering them with absolute conviction. There's so much going on at such enormous speed that it's difficult to take in, and there's very little respite until the closing ballad, *Epilogue*. Thrilling, then, but also exhausting.

Fraser Lewry

Puppy

The Goat *SPINEFARM*

Alt.rock duo dismiss the genre's boundaries.

This debut from Puppy has been a *long* time coming. The trio have spent the past three years releasing and re-releasing singles and elbowing their way on to every tour going, supporting everyone from metallers King 810 to psych rockers Genghar.

The legwork was worth it, giving Puppy time to hammer home their USP: a sound which fuses alt.rock, grunge, glam-metal and art-pop and draws from myriad bands, from Smashing Pumpkins, to Weezer, to Sabbath. *Poor Me* draws from all three of those influences, *World Stands Still* would sound at home on Ghost's *Prequelle*, and on *Black Hole* and *Vengeance* a 90s vibe permeates with a strong whiff of cock-rock and plenty of hooks. The only old track here is early single and veritable neck-snapper *Entombed*, which is still the best thing they've written, but that doesn't diminish what is a consistently intriguing, fresh yet nostalgic record.

Dannii Leivers

Heart

Live In Atlantic City *EARMUSIC*

An evening with some of Heart's friends and fans, but not enough Heart.

On an album that features guitarist Dave Navarro, Alice In Chains and Carrie Underwood, among others, *Bébé Le Strange* opens it with a bang, while Nancy Wilson's unmistakable folk-rock introduction slices through the crowd at the start of *Crazy On You*. Wilsons Gretchen and Ann pay brilliant homage to Led Zeppelin with *Rock N' Roll*, and Ann's astounding vocals, also showcased in her shared rendition of *Alone* with Carrie Underwood, are the album's standout feature.

Several staple Heart hits, including *What About Love, These Dreams* and *Never*, were missing from a set-list that included

Alice In Chains' *Would?* and *Rooster*, but *Barracuda* brought together all the evening's guest stars for an explosive finale.

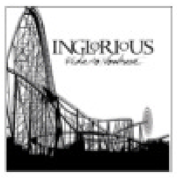
Even in 2006 the Wilson sisters were showing rock how it's done, with songs that have stood the test of time. If only they'd performed more of them.

Phoebe Flys

Inglorious

Road To Nowhere FRONTIERS

The journey becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.



It's been an interesting year for what passes as modern classic rock. Greta Van Fleet have brought youthful zest and sex appeal back into the fold, while Massive Wagons have achieved the seemingly impossible by gleefully breathing new life into various creaking formulas.

Meanwhile, over in the Purple corner, Inglorious have made their third album. Like their first two, *Road To Nowhere* is impressive for being robust rather than brilliant. The ingredients are still there. Nathan James's voice is still a wonder to behold, the riffs crunch and thud convincingly, and the songwriting is solid. But only *Never Alone*, a genuinely lovely tune in the vein of Alter Bridge, suggests Inglorious are capable of shifting gear and moving things forward. *Liar*'s rubbery, grinding riff provides hope before reverting to type, and you're left wishing the band would demonstrate the kind of wild adventure of the bands they pay homage to so capably.

Fraser Lewry

Steve Hackett

At The Edge Of Light INSIDEOUT

Hackett's 26th solo album: the sound of real world music.

Much like last year's inimitable *The Night Sire*, Hackett's latest album reads like letters home from abroad. Once again he's taken his guitar and gone rogue, making and finding music wherever he lands. When we spoke to him very recently he was days away from a trip to Ethiopia to see what music that land might offer.

At The Edge Of Light reads like notes from the road less travelled, lilting, beautiful and suffused with colours and shades from across the globe. *Shadow And Flame* echoes India and is carried away on a sitar's strings. *Under The Eye Of The Sun* shelters its eyes under a blistering sky, an attack of sounds that settles and stills as the light fades. Like a lot of the songs here it's expansive and filled with ideas and sounds, Hackett's world view distilled and pouring out from the heart.

Philip Wilding

Toy

Happy In The Hollow

TOUGH LOVE

Playtime is over.

In the year when Idles kicked their way to popular acceptance with a righteous ferocity, it's a brave or foolish band that releases an album as wan, weary and meatless as Toy's fourth and expects anyone to care. On *Happy In The Hollow*, gone is any trace of the searing vitality that drove their earlier records; in its place a winsome urge to recreate all of the waftiest, wimpiest moments from pop history.

Sullen shoegaze? *Last Warmth Of The Day* is as drowsy and drippy as peak Chapterhouse. Acoustic instrumental prog? Take a strumble around *Charlie's House*. Passionless krautrock? Motorik mush *Jolt Awake* is so aimless it'll keep you ironically comatose. Fey 60s hippie folk? Atrocious Bontempi borefest *The Willo* is a full seven minutes of dribbled mithering and riffs that could be being played by a drunk, deaf cat, seemingly intent on not stopping until Toy write a sodding tune for it. They don't.

Occasionally a burst of coherence drifts out of the fug – *Mechanism* and *You Make Me Forget Myself* deign to include endearing, mist-shrouded melodies, and the art-rock rampage of *Energy* sounds like it was recorded while everyone was at least semi-conscious. Otherwise, you're baffled that Toy thought this thrown-together mangle of cheap beats, bored buzzing and non-songs was even half-finished. You're happy with something this hollow?

Mark Beaumont

Gin Annie

100% Proof OFF YER ROCKA

Catching the spirit of rock.

You can tick off the influences informing virtually every track on this Wolverhampton hard rock quintet's debut. Which is not to accuse them of plagiarism, but rather to admire their broad taste that runs from The Almighty to Alter Bridge via Guns N' Roses, Skid Row, Slipknot and more. Besides, they write their own songs, which inevitably lets some of their nascent character show through, and they know their way around a good melody and a chorus.

What they need now is an aspiring Mutt Lange who can turn their quirks and idiosyncrasies into a commercial identity. It's something the band would respond to because, as the last track states in an anthem-y kind of way, they are *Born To Rock N Roll*.

Hugh Fielder

Skunk Anansie

25live@25 REPUBLIC OF MUSIC

Live performances of Skin and co's best bits.

Skunk Anansie have always had some great song titles: *Intellectualise My Blackness, Yes It's Fucking Political, Little Baby Swastikkka*. Their music has an acerbic sweep and rigorous power lacking in so many of their contemporaries. It is a genuine pleasure to listen back to songs such as *Weak* ('96), *Hedonism* ('97) and the debut single *Selling Jesus* ('95) on this new catch-all live album – recorded at various stages of the band's 25-year career – and realise that they have lost none of their potency.

Skin still sings with a passion that could bring the heavens tumbling, and the classic line-up of Ace (guitar), Cass (bass) and Mark (drums) rock with a righteous fury. There are 25 tracks here and you'd be hard-pressed to find a duff moment.

Everett True

ROUND-UP: BLUES

By Henry Yates

The Cold Stares: triumph out of adversity.

The Cold Stares

Mountain OURFANS

What doesn't kill you makes you a stronger songwriter. If that wasn't clear from Walter Trout's rosy-livered resurrection, then it's underlined by this death-or-glory third album from Indiana alt.blues duo The Cold Stares.

The songs on *Mountain* were written by frontman Chris Tapp with the rank breath of cancer on his neck, and doubtless that's why not a solitary punch is pulled. The glowering slide-blues of *Wade In The Darkness* eyeballs his disease and refuses to look away (*'I pray that we just make it out alive'*). The ghostly war poetry of *Killing Machine* salutes those already six feet under (*'Pitch them down to the dirt below'*).

That might sound like heavy going, but the album's mood is sweetened by Tapp's subsequent all-clear and the duo's joyous sessions in LA; you can hear the catharsis in swaggering, Clutch-referencing standouts like *The Great Unknown* and *Sleeping With Lions*.

A perilous mountain to climb, no doubt, but the view from the top is spectacular.

Helen Rose

Trouble Holding Back

MONKEY ROOM MUSIC

Helen Rose is bigger than the blues bracket. With her slinking vocal and sax breaks, *Love And Whiskey* seems touched by the hand of Bowie, while *Flatlands Of North Dakota* has a slither of strings redolent of Nick Drake. She's always convincing, whether wailing on *When The Levee Breaks* or blowing horn on the hypnotic *A Dangerous Tender Man*.

Mike Zito

Blue Room RUF

Back in 1998, Mike Zito was a punk kid with a fistful of original songs and enough money for one day in the studio. Revisit *Blue Room* now and you'd have to agree with Zito that his songcraft, vocal and guitar skills would all improve along the road, but this reissued debut is still a thrilling wham-bam, with gems like *Pull The Trigger* offering the first signs of greatness.

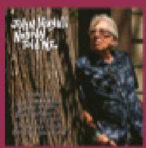
Lindsay Beaver

Tough As Love ALLIGATOR

Looking on the sleeve like she's about to shove those drumsticks where the sun don't shine, Lindsay Beaver is hard as nails. The Canadian doesn't break much new ground on *Tough As Love* – it's mostly angried-up, ivory-abusing proto-rock'n'roll – but her delivery on moments like *Don't Be Afraid Of Love* has bristling balls of fire to match The Killer himself.

John Mayall

Nobody Told Me FORTY BELOW



A perk of being the Godfather is that you can call in favours from the blues family. For *Nobody Told Me*, Mayall cajoles a shit-ton of star guests – Joe Bonamassa, Alex Lifeson, Todd Rundgren – on to one of the most upbeat albums in his catalogue. And while the 85-year-old can write these 12-bar bouncers in his sleep, it's always a pleasure to hear them.

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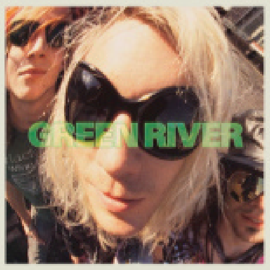
THE HARD STUFF
REISSUES

Green River



Reissues SUB POP

Draining the swamp (again).

If Green River just ended up as grunge casualties like Blood Circus or somebody, then it might be easier to take 'em at face value and move on from there. But the facts of the case are that the band imploded right when things got interesting, and splintered off, famously, into Mudhoney on one side and Mother Love Bone/Pearl Jam on the other. These eye-popping and ear-battering reissues basically map out the two distinct factions in this increasingly compelling and, let's face it, life-altering band.

Dry As A Bone (**7/10**) was Green River's second EP, recorded in 1986 but released in '87, two years after the band's monstrous sledgehammer-sludgepunch debut *Come On Down*. By that point future Mudhoney fuzz-buster Steve Turner had already left the band, distraught by Stone Gossard and Jeff Ament's arena-rock ambitions, and you can hear the rumblings of glam-metal to come even at this early hour, particularly in the sleazy, slithery *Baby Takes* and the flashy, boogie-woogie bullshit of *Unwind*. Elsewhere though it's what you might expect from a bunch of young bozos raised on the twin terrors of Black Flag and Black Sabbath – gnashing-thrashing proto-grunge guitars and Mark Arm's power-puking yelps. The expanded edition packs in tracks from various compilations along with some long-lost and previously unreleased snarly tracks, including the molten leather of *Bleeding Sheep* lovingly ripped from Betamax tape (!) by producer Jack Endino.

Rehab Doll (**8/10**), released a year later, was Green River's only album. Despite the fact that the band were disintegrating during its recording, it remains one of the most exciting and groundbreaking albums of 1988, a starry-eyed, head-on collision of bloodthirsty 60s garage-punk (via singer Mark Arm) and post-glam 80s stadium metal (via everybody else). Anchored by the incredible Motor City blowout of *Swallow My Pride* (as with *Together We'll Never*, a re-recording of an older Green River tune), *Rehab Doll* is state-of-the-art glam-grunge, as defiantly ugly and brutal as it is ambitious and accessible. It was a portal through which most of the 90s poured but, again, even without the rich history that followed it's also a total motherfucker of an album. The reissue includes a comp track as well as Endino's original stripped-down eight-track version of the album, which makes the band sound even more raw and feral.

If the last time you dipped into this well was the 1990 CD re-release, then these lavishly produced (re)reissues will provide ample thrills.

Sleazegrinder

Steve Jones

Reissues ROCK CANDY

Ex-Pistol's solo albums.

Putting aside his ability to elicit outrage from sections of the British public with choice televised swearwords, Steve Jones's blunt-force efficiency as a guitarist was key to the Sex Pistols' initial success and enduring appeal.

Newly sober in the mid-80s, with the unfulfilled potential of post-Pistols outfits The Professionals and Chequered Past behind him, Jones's creativity resurfaced, leading to 1987's *Mercy* (**7/10**). The record's introspective, melancholic feel drew flak from some quarters, due to the contrast with his raw Pistols past, but anyone who enjoyed Jones's contributions to Iggy Pop's '86 album *Blah Blah Blah* or dug what Billy Idol was up to contemporaneously should find *Mercy* a rewarding listen. Jones's playing had matured, embellishing the title song and *Raining In My Heart* with emotive lines that would sit well on a Chris Isaak album, although shades of his brash early style still shine through rockers like *Give It Up* and *With You Or Without You*.

By 1989, reigning champs like Guns N' Roses, Mötley Crüe and The Cult were citing the Pistols as an influence. Members of all three bands assisted Jones on his subsequent slab of cranked-up biker rock, *Fire And Gasoline* (**8/10**). Ian Astbury duets on lapel-grabbing opener *Freedom Fighter*, Axl Rose follows suit on Pistols bruiser *I Did U No Wrong*, Nikki Sixx co-wrote the AC/DC-flavoured *We're Not Saints*, and Jones growls, riffs and solos fiercely throughout the album.

An overlooked and under-appreciated record. Fans of AC/DC and Rose Tattoo are advised to get in on the (remastered) action this time around.

Rich Davenport

Third Ear Band

Reissues ESOTERIC

Ear'say.

Emerging from the early morning sleepy chaos of London's UFO Club in 1966, the Third Ear Band's avant-garde acoustic classical/Indian/Arabic fusion somehow soothed hippie audiences too zonked to care, and the band progressed from there to opening Hyde Park shows for Pink Floyd, the Rolling Stones and Blind Faith.

Elements (**4/10**), their second album, originally self-titled, features four 10-minute tracks, one on each of the elements (hence the retitling), although it's sometimes hard to tell the difference between *Air, Earth, Water* and *Fire* amid the dissonant free-form playing. Even the out-takes get confused. More interesting is their soundtrack to German TV film *Abelard And Heloise*, on the first of two bonus CDs (also featuring an unreleased album and various BBC radio sessions, most of them not surprisingly for John Peel) where the demands of the plot and time constraints bring out a smidgeon of form and some warbling melodies amid the hypnotic droning.

Similarly, *Music From Macbeth* (**5/10**), their soundtrack for Roman Polanski's dark and violent film (not that Shakespeare's original text is a barrel of laughs) gives them something tangible against which to impose their classically trained, impressionistic wits. In fact you're probably better off starting with *Music From Macbeth* before venturing into the elemental jungle.

Hugh Fielder

GBH

The Rough Justice Years

CHERRY RED

Stoke Oi! stalwarts' '86-93 output repackaged on five-disc box set.

While 80s musical trends left UK hardcore punk sounding a little dated, original scene setters like GBH made a fair fist of incorporating thrash metal into their sound. Key factor: the energy, power and three-chord immediacy remained. *Midnight Madness & Beyond* (1986) retained strong, snappy songs under the turbo-charged back beat, and the *Oh No It's GBH Again* EP material is a welcome addition. Very metal? Not yet, despite what punk purists will tell you.

No Need To Panic (1987) included baffling experiments such as the cod-Latin coda to *Unanswered Prayers*, but the tracks from exhilarating EP *Wot A Bargain* beefed up the banger quotient. Lead track *Checkin' Out* then made it on to the self-produced *A Fridge Too Far* (1989), but here it sounds more like a thrash metal number.

CHARLES PETERSON/PRESS

And although GBH show little mellowing on raging hardcore like *Pass The Axe*, something was afoot.

1990's *From Here To Reality* is delivered with more distinct American accent from Colin Abrahall and punctuated with knots of metallic fret squall, but the speed and riff-punch save the day. Not so *Church Of The Truly Warped* (1992), which for all its anthemic shoutalong tunes, slows too close to trad-rock for comfort.

Johnny Sharp

Various

Third Noise Principle: Formative North American Electronica 1975-1984

CHERRY RED

Excellent compilation featuring synth-pop/synth-rock both famous and obscure.

In terms of its founders and origins, electronica is considered to be a European affair, from Stockhausen to Kraftwerk, to the British synth-poppers whose early-80s invasion of America caused such consternation to the US rock fraternity. But America has always had its own electronic mavericks, many of whom feature here – The Residents, Philip Glass, Chrome, Terry Riley and Ministry all feature on this four-CD compilation, as does Suicide's *Rocket USA*, from their self-titled 1977 debut album from which so much proceeded. It's also excellent to hear *Drumming* by much under-regarded synth pioneer Laurie Spiegel, from 1975.

Great as these all are, and sinful as it would be if they were excluded, for the synth aficionado it's the more obscure gems that make this compilation one to treasure. These are mostly taken from the early 80s, sometimes on cassette-only releases, heavily influenced by the likes of Throbbing Gristle and Cabaret Voltaire and yet with an idiosyncratic, muscular character of their own which makes them seem fresh and substantial rather than pale and dated.

Opener *The Devil Makes The Loudest Noise*, by Tone Set, is one such example, while Smegma's *Shoes* is extremist jamming à la John Cage. Other tracks beggar comparison; I've heard little else like Kevin Lazar's mega-fuzzy *First Mutation*, or *Possibly Winston* by Isosceles, who have gone so far underground in their activities that they refuse to be named. Dave Henderson has done a fine job with the sleeve notes, both in his overview and in hunting down many of the contributors decades on. The future seems so long ago.

David Stubbs

Brownsville Station

Air Special ROCK CANDY

Michigan rockers' rifftastic final album remastered.

Ann Arbor greasers Brownsville Station made a small but indelible mark on pop's cistern with their 1973 smash hit single *Smokin' In The Boys Room*. *Air Special*, their final studio album, released five years later, suggested that, despite the band's waning commercial fortunes, they still had plenty left in the tank.

It was recorded in the basement of their manager's music shop, and the off-the-cuff feel allows mainman Cub Koda free rein to indulge his blues obsessions. *Taste Of Your Love* has the sleazy appeal of *Eliminator*-era ZZ Top, while muscular power-pop anthem *Waitin' For The Weekend* is the sound of Big Star on steroids. *Cooda Crawlin'* is so swampy it requires quinine for safe listening, while *Let It Roll* is a no-nonsense boogie which lends credence to the idea that Brownsville Station had the makings of an American Quo.

With *Air Special* the band folded with all guns blazing.

Paul Moody

Angelic Upstarts

The Albums 1983-91

CAPTAIN OI!

How much Oi! can one punk stand? A lot, it seems.

This supremely exhaustive six-CD, 100-track set from South Shields' politically charged punks is the second in a series of reissues from Cherry Red/Captain Oi! This new batch covers the Upstarts' turbulent 80s period, which finished with 1991's 'reunion' album *Bombed Out*, and includes any number of diatribes and railings against the state, in particular anti-Margaret Thatcher songs such as *Brighton Bomb* (1985) and *Woman In Disguise* (1982). The accompanying booklet has oodles of pictures and words: record sleeves, liner notes, news clippings, unpublished photos.

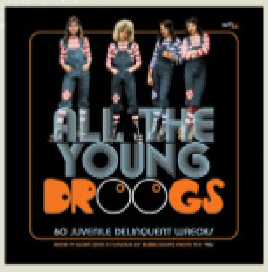
Sometimes unfairly associated with the more boneheaded aspect of skinhead culture, Angelic Upstarts were actually fiercely anti-fascist, and albums such as 1984's *Last Tango In Moscow* and 1987's controversy (and Parliament)-baiting *Blood On The Terraces* promoted a socialist working-class outlook, always with singer Mensi's stentorian tones topping the righteous fury.

During the 80s, Angelic Upstarts drew on aspects of folk music for their sound. Blink and there's little difference between singles such as 1983's inspirational pro-miners' strike *Solidarity* and more acceptable anti-establishment voices such as Billy Bragg.

Angelic Upstarts were never going to win any prizes for musical originality, but no one could doubt Mensi's heart.

A band in need of reappraisal.

Everett True



Various Artists

All The Young Droogs: 60 Juvenile Delinquent Wrecks RPM/CHERRY RED

Overlooked chancers, prancers and romancers, salvaged from glam-pop's guttering.

Black and white became colour and your big brother was back at home with his Beatles and his Stones, the boring old sod. We saw the suits and platform boots and our teenage rampage was on. Leading the rather fey charge were the giants of British glam (Bowie, Bolan, Roxy) and then, as a kind of affordable lager shandy to their prohibitively positioned Cointreau, the greats of glitter-pop (Sweet, Slade, Mud). Next came another, corner-shop fizzy pop, level. While all that premier league posing was catching the eyes and ears, the wishful wannabes of the lower divisions also served, stomping and pounding in workmanlike wonder, emboldened by the narcissistic dawn of the 70s but unable to transform tin into gold.

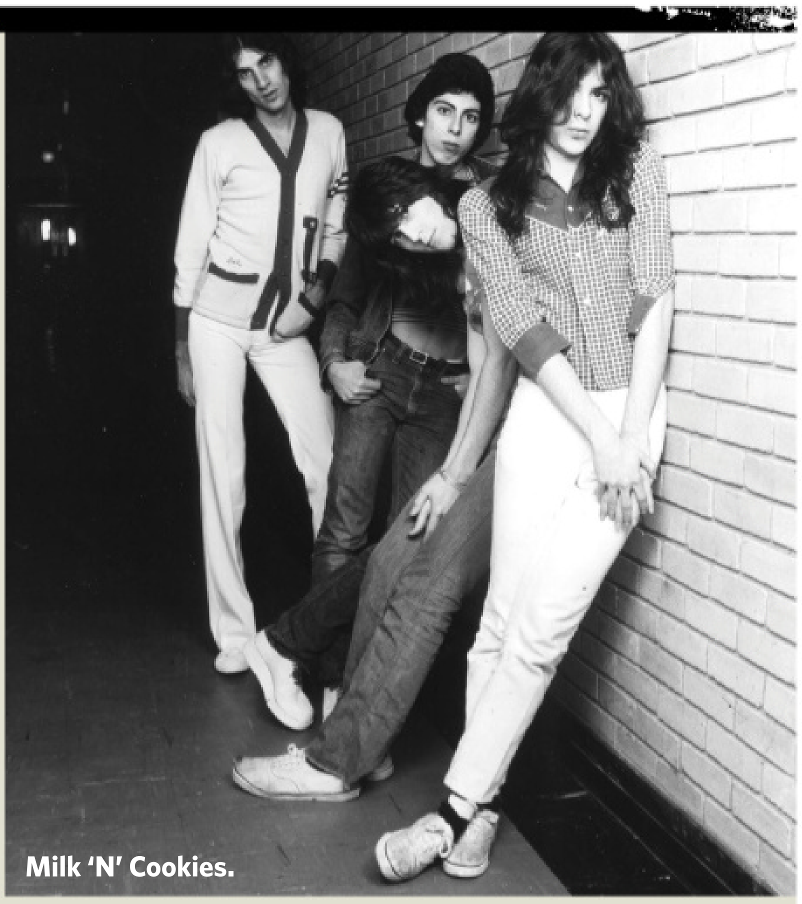
More than four decades on, their neglected nuggets have become intriguing ingots of a lesser precious metal, which glint and beguile. It's costume jewellery, but these trinkets are a treat.

Curated by Phil King, the cat behind previous junkshop search-and-rescue compilations such as *Velvet Tinmine*, the three-CD *All The Young Droogs* reaches out from Blighty, embracing glam gambollers from around the world. It's themed in three parts: Rock Off! gives you basic boogie bangers, Tubthumpers & Hellraisers bottles the lightning of the era's beefed-up bubblegum pop-rockers, while Elegance & Decadence dresses to the more subversive side of the times.

A handful of known names are scattered throughout (Iggy And The Stooges, Mott The Hoople, Hello), but the joy of this treasure trove is its stream of big-fun surprises, from the clod-hopping to the convulsive, many previously unfamiliar with this newfangled 'CD' idea. Raunch out as Method's *Hold On Tight* shrieks, with becoming abandon, *'Knickers in a twist, girl!'* Milk 'N' Cookies' *Wok N' Woll* sizzles, as do the pragmatically named Iron Virgin. Hark at hedonists like Harpo, Bilbo Baggins and Angel (produced by Andy Scott). Revel in classy gender-upending as Brett Smiley, John Howard, Sleaze (TV Smith on vocals) and Metro's *Criminal World* compare wardrobes with Be-Bop Deluxe, the Doctors Of Madness and Woody Woodmansey's U-Boat as well as the short-lived post-Bowie Spiders From Mars (delivering a jolly anti-racism singalong).

This jubilant, ritzy resurrection offers a Poundland paradise.

Chris Roberts



Milk 'N' Cookies.

THE HARD STUFF REISSUES

Dio

Reissues *BMG*

Heavy metal icon's overlooked late-period albums re-evaluated.

Ronnie James Dio was a dial-up man in a broadband world. Before the much-deserved victory lap that was Black Sabbath spin-off Heaven & Hell and his subsequent posthumous canonisation, the little man with the huge voice always appeared to be several steps behind what was going on elsewhere.

That certainly seems to be confirmed by *Angry Machines* (**5/10**), the earliest of these four late-period reissues from the band he fronted. Originally released in 1996, the group's seventh album bore the hallmarks of a band belatedly trying to strip things down to fit in with prevailing grunge trends, a good couple of years after that particular bandwagon had left town. A hokey, technology-is-bad theme and drab, mid-paced riffing was the order of the day. Even Ronnie's soaring voice sounded earth-bound and grim.

But somehow Dio – man and band – relocated their shared mojo just when it looked to be beyond salvation. With a reconstituted line-up – hack guitarist Tracy G was out, late-80s six-stringer Craig Goldy was back – 2000's imperious *Magica* (**8/10**) came close to recapturing past glories, not least on stellar power ballad *As Long As It's Not About Love*. Classic metal was still a few years from being fully rehabilitated, but it sounded like Dio had wisely stopped caring about chasing trends.

The ship had been well and truly steadied by the time of 2002's *Killing The Dragon* (**7/10**). The title was disingenuous: Dio was embracing the epic, not pushing it away. As with all the great Dio albums, the *Games Of Thrones*-style lyrical set-dressing hid genuine real-world concerns: the plight of homeless youths (*Throw Away Children*), the post-9/11 healing process (*Rock & Roll*), social injustice (*Killing The Dragon* itself, possibly the finest late-period Dio song of them all).

Four years later, Ronnie reunited with Tony Iommi and Geezer Butler as Heaven & Hell, leaving 2006's *Master Of The Moon* (**6/10**) as the last word from the band he had founded nearly a quarter of a century earlier. It was a conscious re-run of its immediate predecessor, wilfully out of time, no longer trying to catch up with the rest of the world but waiting for the rest of the world to catch up with it.

Of course, Ronnie James Dio wouldn't live to see that happen. But while none of these albums could ever match the holy triumvirate – *Rising, Heaven And Hell, Holy Diver* – on which his legend was built, they at least help ensure that the memory of the man who made them stands tall today.

Dave Everley

Jefferson Starship

Across The Expanded Sea Of Suns *RETROWORLD*

Three-CD version of 2001 live album from AOR titans.

For fans of Jefferson aviation, the death of Marty Balin at 76 in September – which follow the demise of Paul Kantner in 2016 – came as a bitter blow. This lovingly compiled reissue acts as a timely reminder of their genius.

There's a ghostly grace to stripped-back versions of *Have You Seen The Stars Tonight* and *Today* taken from a show at the Bottom Line in New York, but the real bonus is an additional disc recorded at the Melkweg in Amsterdam in 2000. Rousing versions of Airplane anthems *Somebody To Love* and *Crown Of Creation*, featuring vocalist Diana Mangano, successfully evoke the bad-trip paranoia of the late 60s, while a 10-minute version of Balin's solo hit *Hearts* is almost unbearably poignant given the circumstances.

Sleeve notes where Kantner reminisces about taking acid-laced cookies on to David Crosby's yacht only add to the sense that this is a document of an era which is sadly passing into history.

Paul Moody

The Third Rail

ID Music *FLOATING WORLD*

Music from a non-existent garage.

A straight reissue of Rev-Ola's earlier compilation, *ID Music* is the Third Rail's one and only album, with eight bonus items including the single versions of their in-house elaborate baroque pop oddities *Overdose Of Love* and *She Ain't No Choir Girl*.

More a concept than a group, the Third Rail (named after the live and lethal high-voltage subway track) were a studio trio with Brill Building origins. Husband and wife team Arthur (he co-wrote Young Rascals' *Good Lovin'*) and Kris Resnick knew how to make a buck out of the teenybop crowds gathering in 1967, but they also sent the genre up with their best-known song, *Run, Run, Run*, a sock-it-to-the-man anthem that Lenny Kaye included on *Nuggets*. Lead singer, the teenager Joey Levine, was their bubblegum pretty boy face whose highly charged vocals lent character to songs as weird as *The Ballad Of General Humpty* and *From A Parachute*. He went on to greater fame with *Yummy, Yummy, Yummy* (by the Ohio Express) and as a TV ad jingle writer for all things sweet and sticky.

Although anachronistic, *ID Music* is packed with experimental ideas, whacked sound FX and mild social commentary laced with Beach Boys harmonies. Cute.

Max Bell

Teenage Fanclub

Vinyl reissues *PEMA*

The Fannies' reissues programme moves into the noughties and beyond.

Much like the ability to cross borders without the need for a visa, it can be a little too easy to take Teenage Fanclub for granted. Of course, with a 21st-century output that has seen them average one new album every five years, they've hardly helped their own cause. Yet, looking back at these two vinyl reissues, quantity and quality are two very different things.

Crafted with Tortoise's John McIntyre, 2005's *Man-Made* (**8/10**), on which post-rock sensibilities meld with the band's innate classicism, is arguably Teenage Fanclub's most intriguing release to date. The likes of *It's All In My Mind* and *Save* display a dryer approach, with the Fannies' characteristic chiming replaced by a sharper production and other trademark McIntyre touches including analogue keyboards and subtle electronic gurgles.

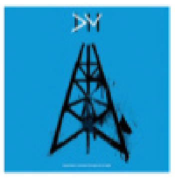
Their return five years later with the effortlessly melodic *Shadows* (**8/10**), which is the sound of a band growing comfortable with the advancing years, and its overall effect is not unlike rediscovering the superiority of brown sauce over ketchup on a bacon butty. *When I Still Have Thee* is a deft exercise in how to grow older without sounding old, and *Baby Lee* is the equal of any of their best bits. Lovely stuff.

Julian Marszalek

Depeche Mode

Construction Time Again: The 12" Singles / Some Great Reward: The 12" Singles *SONY*

As the sub-titles advertise and more.



These two collections comprise 12-inch vinyl singles featuring rare tracks, alternative

GETTY

mixes, seven-inch vinyl versions, live shows and so forth, all of which appeared at the same time as the original album.

You might like to start with the reconstruction of the earlier album. *Construction Time* (**7/10**, 1983), which features the mighty, genre-straddling single *Everything Counts* – the exact point where Yazoo meets Nine Inch Nails – and the equally fine non-album single *Get The Balance Right!*. Its *Combination Mix* (included here) pays equal tribute to Giorgio Moroder and Kraftwerk while still sounding irresistibly poppy in an OMD style. The tumultuous live tracks are taken from the show at London's Hammersmith Odeon on October 25, 1982.

Some Great Reward (**7/10**, 1984) is still pretty darn good, though. Now tell me: who's going to be able to resist the Pet Shop Boys-sounding *Master And Servant (Slavery Whip Mix)* or the, um, dark *Blasphemous Rumours* (a 16-year-old girl attempts suicide, finds God and dies in a car accident two years later)? Then there's Adrian Sherwood's On-U Sound remix of *People Are People*. Depeche Mode are a band that always were far darker than they were painted, right from the start. The live tracks are taken from Liverpool Empire Theatre on September 29, 1984.

A frothy frenzy of quite unsettling electro-pop.

Everett True

Status Quo

The Vinyl Singles Collection 1990-1999 UMC

Quo's latest vinyl-replica set hits their mid-life buffers.

While it is impossible to both have a heart and dislike the rumbustious thump of Status Quo's version of *The Wanderer*, even the most devoted Quo fan might admit that the 1990s were not the band's best decade.

After the brilliance of their 1970s work, Status Quo had had an excellent 80s, riding out the MTV decade with well-chosen covers such as *In The Army Now* and pop rockers like *Dear John*. But the 90s saw them start an ill-advised war with a relaunched, self-consciously 'cool' Radio 1 and also release a string of equally ill-advised cover versions that took them too far from their boogie base line. There were great songs – B-sides like *Heavy Daze*, A-sides like *I Didn't Mean It* and the meant-to-be daftness of *All Around My Hat* – but the covers and the medleys made Quo look like The Spectres all over again – a Butlin's covers band, short of ideas and too eager to please.

This collection of vinyl replicas has some brilliant moments, but the endless reworking, crammed-together hits and fixed-grin joylessness is hard listening. Things would improve in the following century.

David Quantick

Various

Pure Fire – The Ultimate Kiss Tribute Album CLEOPATRA

Kiss knock-off gets unnecessary re-upholstering.

The Kiss tribute album industry is as lucrative as Kiss itself. *Pure Fire* was first released in 2004 as *Spin The Bottle*. It assembled the usual tribute album hacks (Kip Winger, Gilby Clarke, Lemmy, gawd rest his soul), threw in a couple of WTF? names (Melvins' Buzz Osbourne, Helmet's Page Hamilton) and asked them to do their worst.

On that front it was a ringing success. The usually unimpeachable King's X frontman Dug Pinnick huffs his way through *Parasite* with the forced enthusiasm of a man who has just been told Gene Simmons is holding his Chihuahuas at gunpoint, while guitar whizz Paul Gilbert misses the point of Kiss entirely by bringing a set of proper musical chops to *I Want You*.

Fourteen years on, the whole sorry shit-show has been renamed and repackaged in the hope that Kiss fans are too dumb to notice the difference. Gene would be proud.

Dave Everley

The Beta Band

Reissues BECAUSE MUSIC

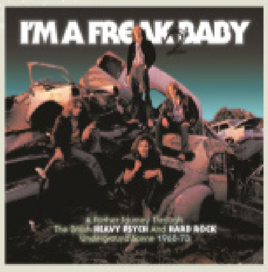
Wildly inventive Scots' parting shots revisited.

Critically adored yet prone to spectacular feats of self-sabotage such as verbally mauling their own debut full-length album before it was even released, experimental Scottish folktronica kings the Beta Band were a unique and beguiling entity at the turn of the current century. Following the reissues of the sublime *The Three EPs* and the chaotic *The Beta Band*, it's time to revisit their final two records.

Hot Shots II (**7/10**) is a direct response to the barrage of ideas on *The Beta Band*, and offers a more focused, minimalist approach that allows Steve Mason's beautiful, chilly vocals to shine, which, combined with carefully curated samples, subtle beats and warm acoustic guitars, becomes an almost ritualistic drone.

Their swansong, 2004's self-produced *Heroes To Zeros* (**6/10**), takes a 180-degree turn and presents a cerebral explosion of alternative pop, sly psychedelia, cheeky in-jokes (a Stevie Wonder-style synth riff on *Easy*, cheesy U2 guitars on *Assessment*) and a spaced tendency to drift. It lets their imaginations run riot, not least on the wonderfully mad *Out-Side*, with its barking dogs, clattering garage-rock and madcap sense of wigged-out fun. But ultimately the album is patchy, and leaves you longing for the majestic rug-pull of those perfect *Three EPs*.

Emma Johnston



Various Artists

I'm A Freak 2 Baby: British Heavy Psych And Hard Rock Underground Scene 1968-73 GRAPEFRUIT

Heavy before heavy was heavy.

While some might moan that the internet brought down the music industry as we once knew it – and it did – it also served to uncover decades' worth of unknown, unheard and previously unloved music from the darkest corners of rock'n'roll. One of the internet's greatest archival achievements so far is the seemingly endless cataloguing of proto-metal bands, those fearsome heavy rockers who existed slightly before or after Black Sabbath and were somehow lost in the sands of time. That's where *I'm A Freak* comes in.

The second edition of this sprawling series of ancient heavies lovingly picks through rock's scrap heap for some of the loudest, dingiest and grimiest cuts it can find. This time around it also threads the needle with a few bands you will already be familiar with – there's heavy shit from Jeff Beck, Leaf Hound, Budgie, Atomic Rooster and the Crazy World of Arthur Brown (a fairly incredible demo version of *Fire*) that will orient the casual listener to a time and place before diving deep into the brine of the hopelessly obscure. While hard-core record collector types will surely recognise key cuts from former Purple bassist Nick Simper's Warhorse or satanic Sab wannabes Monument, most of the tracks here are from virtual unknowns, many of 'em previously unreleased. Exult in the cheap thrills of Purple Haze aping Hendrix without mercy on the chugging '69 demo track *Wait A While*, the grinding death-blues of Brain Worker's *Red Dirt*, the headbanging whisky-doom of Tear Gas's *Woman For Sale*, or Patto's sleazy, punky, frankly berserk *Loud Green Song*, each track a jaw-dropping revelation that your dad and his buddies were invoking fire-belching demons in the garage years before you were even born.

Tear Gas: headbanging whisky-doom.

All of this is on three CDs, navigated by an eye-popping 40-page booklet filled with photos of bushy-mustachioed troglodytes and tales of freaknik glory. By the end of it you will be fully convinced that the early 70s was a truly magical time and place full of dark wizards and acid-gobbling, guitar-wieding satanic cults intent on world domination via Hammond organ solos. Black Sabbath was just the beginning. *I'm A Freak 2* tells another vital chunk of the story. I hope they make a dozen more volumes.

Sleazegrinder

AC/D... Sorry, Krokus! Children of the 80s.

Krokus

As Switzerland's answer to AC/DC prepare for a farewell tour, we look at their must-have (and best not to have) records.

After more than 40 years of rocking, Krokus are not going quietly or without a little mischief. In September 2018 the Swiss heavy metal band announced their 'Adios Amigos' tour, calling time on a career that began in 1975 and also aiming a sly dig at Europe's most successful rock act, Scorpions. The Krokus statement read: "Unlike other bands on their eternal 'farewell tour', we will keep our word and pull the plug at the end of 2019."

It was a provocative comment, but not entirely out of character for a band whose rise to international fame in the early 80s came with a degree of controversy. Krokus were accused of ripping off AC/DC on albums such as 1980's *Metal Rendez-vous* and 1982's *One Vice At A Time*, on which singer Marc Storace belted it out like Bon Scott. Then, with 1983's *Headhunter*, they were accused of ripping off Judas Priest. There was also a farcical feud with Def Leppard when Krokus opened for them on a US tour. As Leppard singer Joe Elliott recalled: "Marc Storace was nicking everything I said on stage, so when I said it the next night it was second-hand. The guy was a complete knob-head!"

But no matter, At their peak, on those 80s albums, Krokus kicked ass. And as they head into their final tour, the band still features four members of the classic 80s line-up – Storace, bassist Chris Von Rohr, and guitarists Fernando Von Arb and Mark Kohler.

It was Von Rohr who formed Krokus in the small town of Solothurn back in '75. They started out playing progressive rock, with Von Rohr as multi-instrumentalist and lead singer. The arrival of Maltese-born Storace in 1979 transformed the band, with *Metal Rendez-vous* the breakthrough that led to worldwide sales of 15 million albums. There have been numerous line-up changes across the years – astonishingly, Von Rohr was ousted from his own band in 1983. And there were many lean years in the 90s and early 2000s. But in recent times, with Von Rohr reinstated, Krokus have rallied again.

For Storace there is always the thought of what might have been. He claims he was twice approached by AC/DC, first in 1980, before Brian Johnson got the gig, and second in 2016, when Axl Rose stepped in. But Storace has had a good run with Krokus. And as Von Arb says: "Every party has to end eventually."

Paul Elliott

Essential Classics

One Vice At A Time

ARISTA, 1982

The best album Krokus ever made is also the best AC/DC album that AC/DC never made. No matter how derivative, *One Vice At A Time* is a prime example of what was known, in the parlance of the times, as cranium-crunchin' chaos.

The album's gonzoid, single-entendre opening track *Long Stick Goes Boom* has the bludgeon riffola of AC/DC circa *Powerage*, with Marc Storace in a priapic frenzy. That energy and intensity is relentless across heavy-hitting numbers such as *Playin' The Outlaw*, *To The Top* and a cover of The Guess Who's *American Woman* (far superior to Lenny Kravitz's later version).

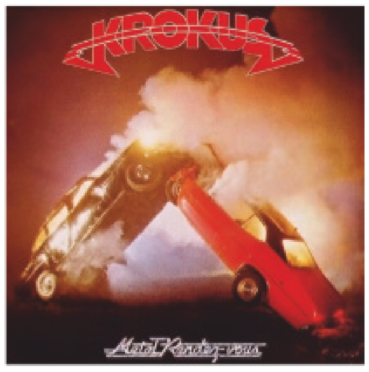
Headhunter

ARISTA, 1983

The band's biggest hit, *Headhunter* went gold in the US. It was also, by design, different to *One Vice At A Time*, which was produced by Tony Platt; the engineer on AC/DC's *Highway To Hell* and *Back In Black*. For *Headhunter*, Krokus had Judas Priest producer Tom Allom. They also had Priest singer Rob Halford backing up Storace on the wonderfully OTT heavy metal anthem *Ready To Burn*. There were shades of Priest in the album's head-banging title track; a subtler mood in the power ballad *Screaming In The Night*; and another great cover, of Bachman-Turner Overdrive's *Stayed Awake All Night*. From metal's golden age, *Headhunter* is a minor classic.

GETTY

Superior Reputation cementing



Metal Rendezvous

ARIOLA, 1980

The fourth Krokus album was the game changer. Storace, a powerhouse singer, lifted the band to a whole new level on the electrifying *Metal Rendez-vous*.

At times they sounded like the new Scorpions – on the blazing *Heatstrokes* and the non-PC *Tokyo Nights*. The other influence was AC/DC. And while this inspired the album's standout track, *Bedside Radio*, a rollicking boogie, Krokus pushed their luck a little too far with *Shy Kid*, its opening lines stolen almost verbatim from Bon Scott's lyrics to *Ride On*.

Certainly *Metal Rendez-vous* had its flaws. but Krokus had arrived with a bang.

Hardware

ARIOLA, 1981

Hardware has always been overshadowed by what came before and after – the pivotal *Metal Rendez-vous* and the titanic *One Vice At A Time*.

Hardware delivered the regulation route-one heavy-duty numbers in *Mad Racket* and *Mr. 69*. In contrast, there was real depth, an atmospheric quality and emotional power, in *Celebration* and *Winning Man*. The surprise turn – for better and for worse – was *Smelly Nelly*, the band's weirdest song. In purely musical terms, it was brilliant; a killer riff offset by spoken verses and bizarre vocal harmonies. But the lyrics were grimly sexist. *Whole Lotta Rosie* this was not.

Hoodoo

COLUMBIA/SONY, 2010

28 years after *One Vice At A Time*, the line-up from that monolithic album was reunited for *Hoodoo*. Most important of all, this was Chris Von Rohr's first recording with Krokus since *Heart Attack* back in 1988. With Von Rohr as producer, the band sounded revitalised on songs that recalled the crazy days of the early 80s: *Drive It In* was a thunderous opening salvo, *Hoodoo Woman* a smoking boogie with a flavour of ZZ Top, and *Keep Me Rolling* another homage to AC/DC. A version of Steppenwolf's *Born To Be Wild* was unnecessary. But with Storace still operating at full power, this was an emphatic, loud and proud return to form.

Dirty Dynamite

THE END, 2013

The band's most recent release, 2017's *Big Rocks*, was just a lazy covers album, but this, their last album of original material, was another late-career triumph, even if the originality of said material was questionable at best.

In the three years since *Hoodoo*, Krokus had added a third guitarist, Mandy Meyer, who had served the band in the 80s and 2000s. On drums was Kosta Zafiriou, ex-Pink Cream 69. But there was no deviation in style, as Krokus brazenly channelled AC/DC to brilliant effect on *Hallelujah Rock N' Roll*, *Go Baby Go* and the title track. The only bum note was in the obligatory cover – a mauling of The Beatles' *Help*!

Good Worth exploring

Painkiller

MERCURY, 1978

The band's third album was the best they made before they hired a singer of real authority in Marc Storace. Recorded in just six days, *Painkiller* was impressively rowdy in a rough-and-ready fashion. But it was evident that Krokus needed a proper frontman. Chris Von Rohr, while game, couldn't sing for toffee.

The album was a curious mix, with opening track *Killer* evoking Steppenwolf, *Get Out Of My Mind* a Quo-style boogie, and *Rock Me, Rock You* an early sign of their AC/DC fixation, while two softer numbers, *Susie* and *Bad Love*, exposed Von Rohr's limitations. The subsequent addition of Storace, formerly of heavy prog act TEA, was the making of them.

The Blitz

ARISTA, 1984

Never the most cerebral of men to begin with, Krokus really dumbed it down on *The Blitz*. In 1984, with hair-metal at the height of fashion, they tarted up their image and covered a 70s glam-rock classic, a trick that had worked for LA rockers Quiet Riot with a hit version of Slade's *Cum On Feel The Noize*.

For all their gusto, however, Krokus made a mess of Sweet's hit *Ballroom Blitz*, but the album still made the US Top 40. And there was much to enjoy for fans of no-brainer rock – in heroically daft, irony-free songs such as *Midnite Maniac*, *Ready To Rock* and *Boys Nite Out*, the latter a leftover from Bryan Adams's *Reckless*.

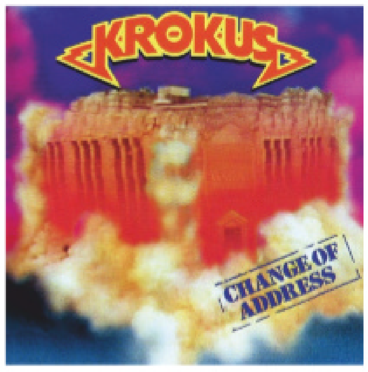
Hellraiser

AFM, 2006

In the 90s, as Marc Storace did a Krokus hokey cokey – in, out, in, out – the band made weak albums with singers Peter Tanner (formerly of aptly named Swiss act Headhunter) and Carl Sentance, a Welshman who fronted Persian Risk, the 80s group led by future Motörhead guitarist Phil Campbell.

But in the 2000s, Storace was back for good. And while the line-up on *Hellraiser* was mostly unfamiliar except for guitarist Mandy Meyer, who first played with the band in 1981, there was enough in it to make it a legitimate Krokus album: the brawn in the title track, *Midnite Fantasy* and *Too Wired To Sleep*, and the glory of Storace in full cry.

Avoid



Change Of Address

ARISTA, 1986

If ever a rock band handed their balls on a plate to their record company, it was Krokus with *Change Of Address*. Under orders from Arista to deliver radio-friendly hits, they ended up with the lamest record of their career.

Producer Tom Werman had cut great albums for Ted Nugent, Cheap Trick and Mötley Crüe, but the AOR gloss he applied to *Change Of Address* failed to mask the mediocrity of songs such as *Hot Rock City*, a gutless wannabe-anthem, *Let The Love Begin*, a ghastly power ballad, and a cynical remake of Alice Cooper's *School's Out*. It was an act of desperation, and it bombed. A nadir for Krokus and for 80s rock.

Essential Playlist

Killer
Painkiller

Heatstrokes
Metal Rendez-vous

Bedside Radio
Metal Rendez-vous

Tokyo Nights
Metal Rendez-vous

Long Stick Goes Boom
One Vice At A Time

Playin' The Outlaw
One Vice At A Time

To The Top
One Vice At A Time

American Woman
One Vice At A Time

Headhunter
Headhunter

Ready To Burn
Headhunter

Screaming In The Night
Headhunter

Stayed Awake All Night
Headhunter

Midnite Maniac
The Blitz

Boys Nite Out
The Blitz

Hellraiser
Hellraiser

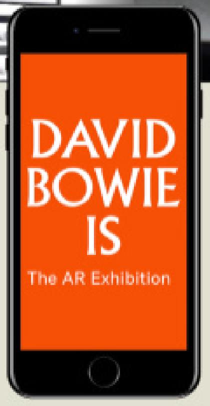
Drive It In
Hoodoo

Hoodoo Woman
Hoodoo

Hallelujah Rock N' Roll
Dirty Dynamite

Dirty Dynamite
Dirty Dynamite

The Hard Stuff
STUFF
BOOKS & DVDs



David Bowie Is...

SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

State-of-the-art app reanimates an icon.

Released on what would have been Bowie's 72nd birthday, the David Bowie Is... app is a noble attempt to distil the groundbreaking David Bowie Is... exhibition down to a tabletop experience downloadable on to your phone. It might sound a bit *Star Trek* put like that but, perhaps surprisingly, there's nothing out of this world about the price. Available from your app store for just £7.99, David Bowie Is claims to offer an immersive trip inside the Bowie exhibition, originally hosted by London's V&A in 2013, which attracted two million visitors to 12 museums worldwide across its five-year circumnavigation.

Comprising a broad selection of artefacts from Bowie's personal collection – original costumes, hand-written lyrics and oil paintings sat alongside video exhibits showing promotional videos, live clips, television appearances – the exhibition offered its own immersive experience as punters donned headphones (loaded with a specially commissioned Tony Visconti megamix of 60 Bowie recordings) to experience the show from within their personal bubble. So replicating a Bowie Is... museum trip using AR shouldn't be any great leap. And as the 'visitor' gets to spend as long as they like with each item, and without crowds, surely it can only be an improvement on the real thing? You'd think.

Don't get me wrong, there's a lot to love here. The technology's impressive, there's a huge amount of stuff – over 400 items set out in a succession of themed 'rooms'. Gary Oldman's narration is clear, informative and succinct, and even five-decade veteran Bowie fans will discover fresh delights (a video clip of our man candidly strumming acoustic snips from his finest moments during a Herb Ritts photo session in '89 is a personal favourite). But there are shortcomings. Probably subjective, but irritating all the same. You use your phone's camera to access the content, you specify a well-lit location and off you go, but then you're tied to looking in that particular direction. If you try sharing the experience by handing your phone across a table, it can't be done. Headphones are essential, no biggie. But the main niggle is one of frustration: you can't investigate as much as you'd like: open notebooks; access every videos you see (obviously, you couldn't at the V&A either, but…). Okay, as 21st-century humans we're spoilt, always wanting more. But for £7.99? This'll do.

■■■■■■■□□□

Ian Fortnam

Present Tense: A Radiohead Compendium

Edited by Barney Hoskyns

CONSTABLE

Rare encounters with reclusive indie-rockers.

Ever since *NME* captioned an early shot of Thom Yorke with the words 'Ugly, ugly, ugly', Radiohead were destined to have a tricky relationship with the media.

With the frontman granting ever-fewer interviews these days, *Present Tense* is an anthology to savour, digging up features and reviews that span from the Oxford indie-rockers' 1991 arrival to Yorke's Atoms For Peace project, and giving you as sharp a portrait of this unknowable band as you could hope for.

Like the music, Radiohead start off accessible, relatable and good fun. Sitting down with a jovial Yorke in 1996, *Addicted To Noise* hears about hangovers, crazed fans and his parents' disapproval at his career choice. But the singer already has an edge – during the same interview, he tells the journalist to "Leave me alone!" – and you feel it growing alongside the band's more angular records, until he's bollocking *Esquire* for suggesting he's middle-class ("In Oxford, we're fucking lower-class").

Even in later pages, from when the interviews grew more scarce, the calibre of the writing keeps *Present Tense* on the rails, whether that's Mark Greif's enjoyably chin-strokey think-piece or Andy Gill's analysis of the industry-wrecking potential of 2007's *In Rainbows*. Radiohead fans will love it.

■■■■■■■■□□

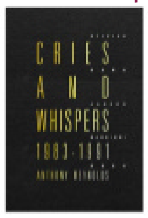
Henry Yates

Cries And Whispers 1983-1991

Anthony Reynolds

BURNING SHED

Painstaking probe into what became of post-split Japan.



Exhaustively researched and lovingly designed, this is the follow-up to Reynolds's 2015 biography of art-glam pioneers Japan, and follows the vapour trails and misadventures of the cast and crew after Ziggy… sorry, David Sylvian broke up the band. It grants almost equal weight to all parties. Thus while Sylvian's solo career is detailed in depth, the stories of the gifted Mick Karn (who sadly died in 2011), Richard Barbieri and Steve Jansen (from the Dolphin Brothers to Steven Wilson's Porcupine Tree and onwards) are also explored. There are interludes on Dali's Car (the personalities of Karn and a post-Bauhaus Peter Murphy made for what record companies call a "high-maintenance" project), and the doomed yet musically productive 1990-91 reunion-that-wasn't-a-reunion of Rain Tree Crow, where in true Hollywood fashion the old school friends (and in Sylvian and Jansen's case actual brothers) fall out all over again.

Sylvian didn't grant any new interviews, but everyone else who could be involved is, as well as a plethora – perhaps an excess – of session men, roadies, fans, etc. Johnny Marr, Bill Nelson, Bill Bruford and Thomas Dolby contribute, and copious photographs range from candidly rare to classically rarefied.

Essential reading for lovers of Catford's most Bergmanesque.

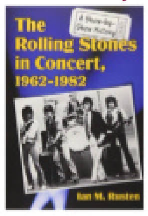
■■■■■■■■□□

Chris Roberts

The Rolling Stones In Concert 1962-1982

Ian M Rusten MCFARLAND & CO.

Got live if you want it.



Surely the Stones in book form is one of rock's most over-saturated markets but still they keep on coming. While the world doesn't need any more cut-and-paste accounts of their 60s antics, there's always a place for hard facts and long-buried accounts, especially if unearthing previously unexplored ground.

Ian Rusten's mission is simple. Using dusty clippings and existing documentation, he strives to cover every show the Stones played between the golden years of 1962, when the fledgling band ventured on to the stage of London's Marquee club that July, and 1982, when the author caught their garish extravaganza at Roundhay Park in Leeds.

Illustrated by photos, memorabilia and ticket stubs, the format resembles the *You Had To Be There* series, with potted summaries of each year, gig facts and clippings-gleaned minutae replacing hazy memories (plus an appendix detailing TV and radio appearances). So now we know Mick wore a pink satin suit for

March 5, 1971's show at Manchester's Free Trade Hall, and Keith's response to a 1973 Australian press conference querying why he "dressed like the wreck of the Hesperus".

In other words, priceless grist for Stones diehards to savour.

Kris Needs

King Diamond

Songs For The Dead Live

METAL BLADE

Classic King Diamond album live in full. Twice.

For fans of King Diamond, 1987's *Abigail* is a lodestone album. So *Songs For The Dead Live* is a special DVD release.

It features two performances of *Abigail* in its entirety. One from the Fillmore in Philadelphia in November 2015, the other from the Graspop Festival the following June. And while might seem a touch excessive to actually release both, there are differences, mainly because one was recorded at an intimate theatre setting, while the other is from a large festival.

Identical set-lists feature numerous King Diamond and Mercyful Fate faves, and there's well-conceived theatrics to underscore the storyline spun across the songs on *Abigail*. It's fun, classy, and proof of the King's stature as a master of the macabre.

Malcolm Dome

The Go-Betweens

Right Here MOVIEHOUSE

Illuminating account of one of music's should-have-beens.

Right in the opening sequence of this fascinating, turbulent, emotionally draining film about Australia's Great Treasure, Brisbane's Go-Betweens (Grant McLennan and Robert Forster, plus drummer Lindy Morrison and assorted musicians), the band nail it. As Forster walks across a panoramic vista – the kind of which is peculiar to Australia alone – a female voice asks: "How would you describe the music that you play?" He replies: "It's like running water off thin white strips of aluminium, it's just running off… It's open fields, it's sunlight. It's also Bob Dylan in sunglasses talking to Francois Hardy, and it's also, um ["balloons," suggests a voice off]… balloons and maybe also in a moment of daring, it suggests a lost primitive civilisation."

The Go-Betweens were never shy of a bit of self-belief. The indie Lennon-McCartney, ahead of their time and out of their time. A dysfunctional poetic family shot through with distrust and doomed love affairs and hubris and betrayal and failure and hope and drugs, but always the most beautiful and complex and personal songs.

Like the band's music, this film explores "the nature of memory, recollection and the past, and how we all remember in our own uniquely personal ways" (director Kriv Stenders).

It is difficult indeed to watch this candid, often contradictory, illuminating account of one of Australia's greatest should-have-beens without tears prickling your eyes. The Go-Betweens should easily have been as big as The Smiths or R.E.M. That they weren't just feels so, so unfair.

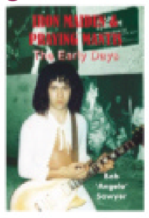
Everett True

Iron Maiden & Praying Mantis: The Early Days

Bob 'Angelo' Sawyer

WYMER PUBLISHING

This memoir of a journeyman guitarist will raise a smile.



Collated from diaries maintained by guitarist Bob Sawyer from December 1976 to July '77 and February to July 1980, this book revisits the early days of the NWOBHM. After being dumped unceremoniously by Maiden, Sawyer finds himself touring with them again on the Metal For Muthas tour as a member of Praying Mantis.

Effectively a list of bed-and-breakfasts, piss-ups, sound-checks and gigs, it's an affectionate tale delivered without real significant insight into the personality of the protagonists. Certainly those inquisitive of Steve Harris's steely determination will be disappointed, although the book does reveal escalating tension between Harris and manager Rod Smallwood on one side and the increasingly frustrated vocalist Paul Di'Anno on the other. One can only imagine the horror on the faces of the pair when Di'Anno tells an indifferent audience in Oxford: "Now fuck off home and drink your fucking cocoa you fucking cunts."

Dave Ling

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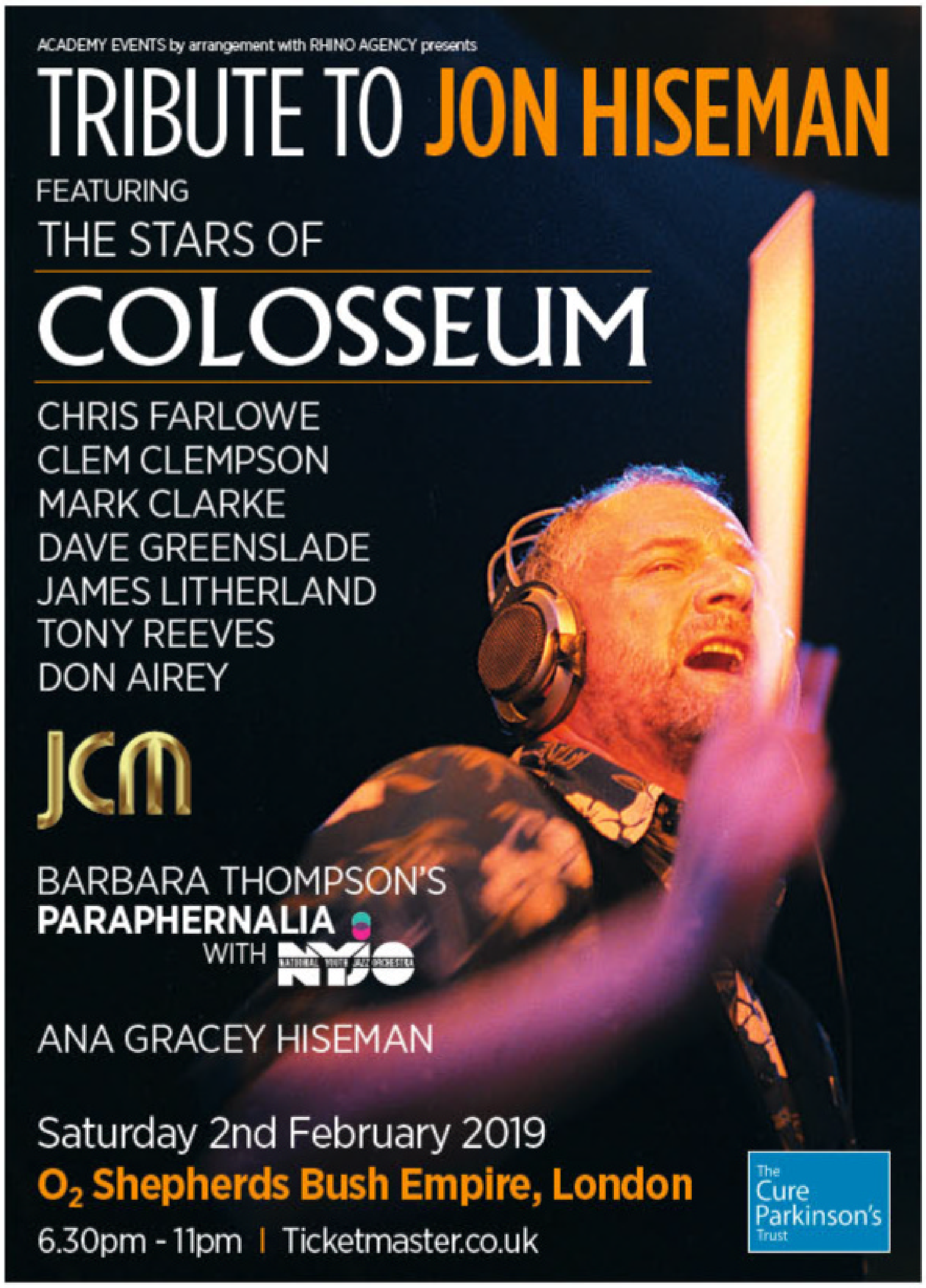

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CLASSIC ROCK

LIVE!

The High-Voltage What's On Guide

Edited by Ian Fortnam (Reviews) and Dave Ling (Tours)

DUNCAN EVERSON

p113

Clutch

Colossal riffs, magnificent beards and giving it some cowbell.

p104 Interviews
p107 Tour Dates
p110 Live Reviews

> "People don't come to see a band play their latest stuff. It's about finding a balance."

The Stranglers

Expect classics, a few new songs and some that they've blown a lot of dust off.

There's momentary confusion when *Classic Rock* calls bassist Jean-Jacques Burnel at his home in France, when Stranglers frontman/guitarist Baz Warne answers the phone. It soon transpires that the veteran band are not only preparing for a 19-date UK tour but also writing a new studio record.

How come Baz is at your place?
We're throwing around ideas for new songs. We save up all our scraps, and then get together to see which might work and which are a load of shit.

What can you tell us about the direction of the first Stranglers record in seven years?
It's shaping up to be completely different to the last one [*Giants*]. With fewer commercial imperatives we can really extend ourselves. One person who's heard some of the ideas called it prog-punk.

Billed as Back On The Tracks, this tour will preview of a handful of the new songs.
Yeah. It affords an amazing opportunity to get them battle-ready.

You'll also be playing some lesser-performed songs. Could you tell us maybe one of those?
That would spoil it. But some haven't been heard in a very long while. People don't come to see a band play their latest stuff. It's about finding a balance.

Which cities do you most look forward to playing in?
We like them all or we wouldn't keep going back year after year, but some are noisier than others. Glasgow has got to be one of the noisiest ones.

What do The Stranglers do on tour on their days off these days?
We try not to have too many of those, because you lose your edge. On travel days we go out to dinner together. We are among those bands that doesn't hate the sight of each another. We're really good friends. We don't exist purely for commercial reasons.

Is touring still fun or, given trends within the industry, has it become a necessary evil?
Touring and playing is fantastic. I could do without the travelling, but the gigs make it worthwhile. The day I don't want to go on stage is when I pack it in.

***The Stranglers: The Movie* is on the way. As well as a premiere in London, fans will also get a chance to put questions to co-founding drummer Jet Black and the film's director David Boni at three regional showings.**
We're hoping that the movie will cover every stage of the band's history, complete with old footage.

Are you saying you don't *know* that it will?
Well, I don't want to see it just yet. It shouldn't be just a vanity project intended to make us look great. If it's warts 'n' all, that's how it's going to be. Nobody wants a propaganda tool, do they? Hopefully our brilliance will shine through anyway.

Jet suffered a stroke last year. How is he doing?
He's said that his health is declining, but I spoke to him a couple of weeks ago and he sounded chipper.

The support on the tour is Dr Feelgood. In stark contrast to The Stranglers, they are among those unusual bands with no original members.
That's right. It's an interesting situation, isn't it?

As a good friend of yours, Wilko Johnson, will no doubt be interested in your answer to this question: does it matter?
Apparently it doesn't, though my first instinct was to question their validity. They still play all over the country and sell a lot of tickets. I'm amazed myself. The original Feelgoods was a really strong personality-based band, now it's all about the music. Despite the lack of original members the band still carries a lot of goodwill, so we'll see how it goes. **DL**

The tour kicks off in Belfast on February 28.

★ Since forming in 1974, The Stranglers have notched up 23 UK Top 40 singles.
★ Their biggest hit, *Golden Brown*, reached No.2 in 1981.
★ Original singer and guitarist Hugh Cornwell left in 1990.

KEVIN NIXON

both bands

Buckcherry

With a three-band bill, they advise you to get there early

With their eighth studio album, *Warpaint*, due in March, frontman Josh Todd previews the band's co-headline tour alongside Californian neighbours Hoobastank.

When Buckcherry opened at the Stone Free Festival in London last June, half of the audience was still outside the O2 Arena due to overrunning sound-checks.
That was a shame, but we had to go on stage on time. However, the experience at Stone Free was amazing. It's always incredible to travel so far and receive such a welcome.

Before *Warpaint*, the band's first album in three years, you released a version of Nine Inch Nails' *Head Like A Hole*.
We were jamming in the studio and didn't know that Mike Plotnikoff [producer] was recording us. I really like the way it came out, and the fans seem to agree.

Can you give us a hint of what we will hear on the album?
It's such a great record. We wrote about thirty songs and picked the best eleven. It's quite edgy, but there's a couple of slow songs. I really feel like it's one of our best.

Will you be playing some of its songs on these UK dates?
We've already played *The Vacuum* and *Devil's In The Details* live, and we'll also be including *Head Like A Hole*, of course.

Are you friends with Hoobastank?
We've done tours together in the past. They're really nice guys.

This is a co-headlining tour on which both bands will be playing full-length sets.
Yeah, it's good value for money for the fans, and those guys have a string of hits. *The Reason* [2003] was so huge for them.

What about the opening act, Las Vegas band Adelitas Way?
Again, we've done a lot of touring with them, and they're really great live. I'd recommend people get there early to see them.

Will Buckcherry be returning to the UK later in 2019?
There's some talk of that, but let's get these dates out of the way first. **DL**

The tour ends in Norwich on February 17.

KEVIN ESTRADA/PRESS

The Revolution

Prince's former band are keeping him and his music alive.

Prince's band The Revolution reunited after his death in 2016. In February they play in the UK for the first time since Prince's Parade tour in 1986. Keyboard player Lisa Coleman talks about life without their leader.

Prince split The Revolution when the group was at its peak. Was it a difficult break-up?
Yes. It was really like a hot romance, and then – boom – heartbreak. And like breaking up with your boyfriend or girlfriend, it was: "What do I do with my life? What's wrong with me?" [Laughs] So it took me a long time to accept it. And then we all felt like it was only temporary – how could that be an end?

When Prince passed away, and you knew that you wouldn't get that call from him again, how did you deal with that?
I'm still floored. I play something on the piano, and want to play it for him, and just forget. And it's just difficult, when the band is together and we're playing, and he's not going to be walking in the door, he's not going to hear us.

When The Revolution got back together and started playing again, were the emotions very raw in that way?
I wish there had been a psychologist watching us, because it took two weeks to be able to play a couple of songs. We'd go to our positions, and we all looked to the centre, like we always did. But there was nobody there. And there wasn't going to be anybody there ever again. Once we did get started, there was some kind of comfort in it. The gigs have evolved into a celebration.

> **"Once we got started, the gigs have evolved into a celebration."**

It sounds like you've gone through the stages of grief in doing this again.
Exactly. Because the only other people on earth who can really understand what I went through by losing Prince are my fellow band members. We were bonded by our experience with him, like surviving a battle. Because the success was gratifying, but it also has a dark side. And we shared that dark side. And we lost Prince to the dark side. And it'll always be difficult to think of that. He had the ability to bring so much joy, and I sometimes wonder if he was able to feel enough of that joy himself.

All of Prince's bands said that he never seemed to sleep, and was always making music. But learning about how he died, and how he really couldn't sleep, did it seem that there was also a cost to that wonderful, all-consuming talent?
It's a double-edged sword. He was trying to be a legend. He didn't pay enough attention to the fact that he was human. He was a human being, and he needed love, and food, and sleep, and he just… [Lisa breaks off for a moment, bereft]. I just don't know why he didn't take care of himself that way. **NH**

The Revolution play London O2 Shepherds Bush Empire on February 13 and 14.

Bernie Marsden

Expect more than just music at the former Whitesnake man's shows.

Now in his mid-sixties and still celebrated for spells with Babe Ruth, UFO and of course Whitesnake, among many others, guitarist Bernie Marsden continues to play gigs. In 2017 he published his book *Where's My Guitar?: On the Tour Bus With The Snakeman*, and he has just followed that up with *Tales Of Tone And Volume*, a book about his expansive, hugely impressive guitar collection.

A review of a recent show of yours in Bristol posed the question: Is there a jollier fella in rock than Bernie Marsden?
I've reached the point in life where if I didn't enjoy doing this then I'd stop. But that's not the case. I still love gigging, and it's better than having had a proper job.

Your one-man shows are more than just music. You chat, drop a few names and don't really take yourself too seriously.
Yeah. I know what I can and cannot do. I'd love to sing like Robert Plant, but that ain't gonna happen. Then again, Percy might turn around and say: "I can't play the guitar like you do", so it's horses for courses. I love the rapport with an audience.

Many of those great songs by early Whitesnake were written on acoustic guitar, weren't they?
That's right, just with two or three of us in the room. And then we would transfer them on to electric. By the time we got to *Ready An' Willing* [in 1980] we wrote on electric guitars in the studio.

You spent two years writing *Tales Of Tone & Volume*, a book about your guitar collection. How many do you own?
My wife would say far too many. There are around seventy of them in the book, collected over forty-odd years for reasonable amounts of money. With so many they can't be played all the time. I wanted to do something with the collection, so I tell an anecdote about each of them, and the photography is spectacular.

> **"I'd love to sing like Robert Plant, but that ain't gonna happen."**

The most famous one is The Beast, a 1959 Gibson Les Paul Standard, nicknamed by Cozy Powell. Presumably that and the rest are under firm lock and key?
Yeah. Having done this book it might now be time to move the vast majority of them on because I can see them all in one place. Guitars really should be played.

You have an upcoming show at London's Under The Bridge. Is that a one-man affair, or with an electric backing band?
It's a band performance. And before that I'm off to India. So I'm keeping very busy.

Do you intend to make a new album in 2019?
I'm planning to, yeah. And there's a bunch of festivals lined up. I've recently started doing some shows that cross over between electric and one-man, which I really enjoy, so I might take that set-up out on the road. I've also got my own signature Marshall amp coming out to commemorate forty years of Whitesnake. **DL**

Marsden's London show is on March 1.

PAUL NUGENT/PRESS

Blue October

It's violin instead of power chords, but it's still rock'n'roll.

Lead singer Justin Furstenfeld checks in as the genre-busting Texans fly in for a run of UK shows.

Blue October toured the UK less than a year ago, so why return so soon?
Because we love it there, and our album [*I Hope You're Happy*] came out after we left. So why wait two or three years?

Now that's what you call working to a schedule. And you'll be doing a bit of recording on this visit too.
Yeah. During a day off this time I'm going to Real World, the studio of my all-time hero Peter Gabriel, to do some recording there. That's so exciting I will probably roll around naked.

Will the subject of *Your Love Is Like A Car Crash* know who she is?
Probably not, though it's about a friend who was being put through the mill by one of those ladies. I wanted to make her sound like a cross between a Russian ballet dancer and a James Bond heroine.

Nine albums in, has the band's unclassifiable sound been a blessing, or a curse?
Oh, a blessing. Try classifying Peter Gabriel. I don't understand why bands stay in one genre. I grew up on George Michael, Peter Gabriel, The Cure and The Smiths. Put them into a blender and you get us.

***Classic Rock* once called Blue October "Jane's Addiction reinvented for the 21st Century, but with Weezer's capacity to write hits".**
I'd never heard that before. What an amazing compliment. Whoever wrote those words, I want to lick their cheek.

Having a violin player in the line-up only enhances that unorthodoxy.
Yeah. I'm really not into power chords right now. Rock'n'roll can be played without power chords. Our album uses strings to create an impact. It sounds romantic as hell.

Despite the album's upbeat feel, how are you are coping with some well-documented mental health issues, and also with maintaining your sobriety?
For the past thirty-six years, every day has been a fight. I used to whine about that, but now I keep my body pure and healthy. I allow myself just one cigarette a day and I'm winning the battle. **DL**

The tour begins on Oxford on February 15.

Tour Dates

2000 TREES FESTIVAL
YOU ME AT SIX, THERAPY?, EVERY TIME I DIE, MORE

Cheltenham	Upcote Farm	Jul 11-13

ACOUSTIC FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN
BIG COUNTRY, EAGLE-EYE CHERRY, MORE

Uttoxeter	Racecourse	May 31-Jun 2

AIRRACE

London	Manette Street Borderline	Apr 19
Swansea	Hangar 18	Apr 20

AIRRACE, THE TREATMENT

Oxford	Academy	Mar 21
Evesham	Iron Road	Mar 22
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Mar 23
Blackpool	The Waterloo	Mar 24

ALICE IN CHAINS, BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB

Glasgow	Braehead Arena	May 23
Birmingham	Barclaycard Arena	May 25
London	Wembley Arena	May 25

MATT ANDERSEN

London	Camden Dingwalls	Mar 22
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Mar 23
Glasgow	Blue Arrow	Mar 24
Nottingham	Bodega	Mar 25

A NEW DAY FESTIVAL
FOCUS, SWEET, HAWKLORDS, SOFT MACHINE, MORE

Faversham	Mt Ephraim Gardens	Aug 2-4

ARENA

Wath upon Dearne	Montgomery Hall	Mar 2
Manchester	Academy 3	Apr 3
Bilston	Robin 2	Apr 4
Norwich	Waterfront Studio	Apr 5
London	Malet Street ULU	Apr 6

RICHARD ASHCROFT

Portsmouth	Guildhall	Apr 19
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Apr 20
Newcastle	Academy	Apr 22
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Apr 23
Hull	Bonus Arena	Apr 25
Birmingham	Academy	Apr 27
Dublin	Olympia	Apr 29
Doncaster	Dome	May 1
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	May 3
London	Olympia	May 4

KRIS BARRAS BAND

Cardiff	The Globe	Feb 6
Manchester	Deaf Institute	Feb 7
Newcastle	The Cluny	Feb 8
Hull	Welly Club	Feb 9
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Feb 12
Cambridge	Portland Arms	Feb 13
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Feb 18
Buckley	Tivoli	Feb 15
Leek	Foxlowe Arts Centre	Feb 16
Bristol	Thekla	Feb 21
Fleet	The Harlington	Feb 22
London	Highbury Garage	Feb 23
Brighton	The Haunt	Feb 26
Oxford	The Bullingdon	Feb 27
Truro	Old Bakery	Mar 1
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Mar 8
Tavistock	The Wharf	Mar 9
Poole	Winter's End Festival	Mar 10
Edinburgh	Voodoo Rooms	Mar 15

BLAZE BAYLEY

Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 28
Stamford	Voodoo Lounge	Mar 29
Sheffield	Corporation	Mar 30
Swindon	Victoria	Apr 4
Swansea	Hangar 18	Apr 5
Southampton	1865	Apr 6
Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Apr 10
Newcastle	Trillians	Apr 11
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Apr 12
Manchester	Club Academy	Apr 13
Buckley	Tivoli	Aug 23
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Aug 24
Blackpool	Waterloo	Aug 25
Plymouth	Junction	Aug 29
Bridgwater	Cobblestones	Aug 30
London	Camden Underworld	Aug 31

BEARDED THEORY'S SPRING GATHERING
THE CULT, LITTLE STEVEN & THE DISCIPLES OF SOUL, MORE

Derbyshire	Catton Park	May 23-26

GETTY

BEHEMOTH, AT THE GATES, WOLVES IN THE THRONE ROOM

Birmingham	Institute	Feb 7
London	Kentish Town Forum	Feb 8
Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 9

ERIC BELL BAND, EDGAR BROUGHTON

London	Manette Street Borderline	Mar 15

DAVE BICKLER

London	Highbury Garage	Mar 11
Bristol	Thekla	Mar 12
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Mar 13
Prestatyn	Hard Rock Hell AOR	Mar 14

BIG BOY BLOATER & THE LIMITS

Farncombe	St John's Church	Feb 15
Bath	Chapel Arts Centre	Feb 16
Winchester	Railway Tavern	Feb 23
Stamford	Mama Liz's Voodoo Lounge	Mar 1
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Mar 10

BRANT BJORK, THE SONIC DAWN

London	Islington Academy	Feb 23

BLUE OCTOBER

Oxford	Academy	Feb 15
Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 16
Bristol	Academy	Feb 17
Brighton	Concorde 2	Feb 19
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 21
Birmingham	Institute	Feb 22
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Feb 23

Recommended

BLUE ÖYSTER CULT, THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT

Norwich	UEA	Feb 21
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Feb 22
Newcastle	Academy	Feb 23
Glasgow	Academy	Feb 24
Leeds	Academy	Feb 26
Birmingham	Institute	Feb 27
Bristol	St Philips Gate	Feb 28
Manchester	Academy	Mar 1

TO BE RETAINED ISSUED SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS ON BACK

JOE BONAMASSA

Glasgow	SEC Armadillo	Apr 22
London	Royal Albert Hall	Apr 24-26

BON JOVI, MANIC STREET PREACHERS

Liverpool	Anfield Stadium	Jun 19
London	Wembley Stadium	Jun 21
Coventry	Ricoh Arena	Jun 23

BUCKCHERRY, HOOBASTANK, ADELITAS WAY

Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 5
Bristol	Academy	Feb 6
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Feb 8
Hull	Asylum	Feb 9
Birmingham	Institute	Feb 10
Newcastle	Academy	Feb 12
Glasgow	Galvanisers	Feb 13
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 15
Oxford	Academy	Feb 16
Norwich	UEA	Feb 17

CAMDEN ROCKS FESTIVAL
GINGER WILDHEART, NEW MODEL ARMY, ASH, MORE

Camden	Various Venues	Jun 1, 2

FRANCK CARDUCCI BAND

London	Balham The Bedford	Mar 19
Cambridge	Portland Arms	Mar 20
Liverpool	Zanzibar Club	Mar 21
Newcastle	Think Tank	Mar 22
Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Mar 23
Stourport	Music Without Boundaries Festival	Mar 24

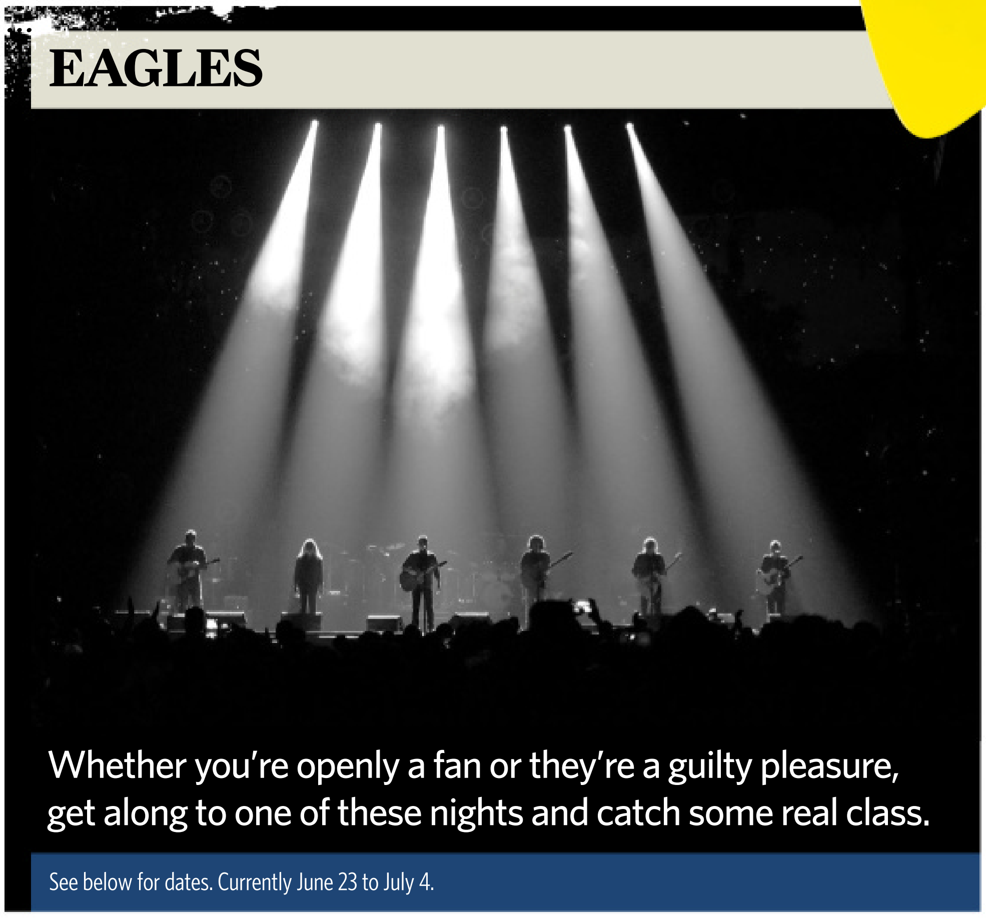
CATS IN SPACE

Wimborne	Tivoli Theatre	Mar 27
Hexham	Queen's Hall Arts Centre	Apr 24
Wavendon	The Stables	Apr 25
Pontypridd	Muni Arts Centre	Apr 26
Glasgow	Oran Mor	May 9
Buckley	Tivoli	May 10
Sheffield	Corporation	May 11
Dublin	Button Factory	Jun 13

CATS IN SPACE, ROCK GODDESS, DIRTY THRILLS

Bristol	Thekla	Mar 8

CLASSIC ROCK RECOMMENDS



EAGLES

Whether you're openly a fan or they're a guilty pleasure, get along to one of these nights and catch some real class.

See below for dates. Currently June 23 to July 4.

Birmingham	Institute	Mar 9
Manchester	Academy 3	Mar 14
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Mar 15
London	Highbury Garage	Mar 16

CAVE IN, OLD MAN GLOOM, BOSSK

London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Apr 12

CHELSEA BLUES RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL
MARTIN BARRE, STEVE NIMMO TRIO, DEEP BLUE SEA, MORE

London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Mar 30

ERIC CLAPTON

London	Royal Albert Hall	May 13-16

CLIMAX BLUES BAND

York	Fibbers	Feb 20
Manchester	Factory	Feb 21
Edinburgh	La Belle Angele	Feb 22
Troon	Winter Blues Fest	Feb 23
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Feb 24
Torrington	Plough Arts Centre	Mar 1
Sheffield	Greystones	Mar 6
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Mar 7
Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 8
London	Manette Street Borderline	Mar 7

JOHN COGHLAN'S QUO

Southampton	The Brook	Feb 8
Aldershot	West End Centre	Feb 9
London	Putney Half Moon	Feb 16
Chelmsford	FC	Apr 1
Plymouth	Hub	Apr 13
Shoreham	Ropetackle Arts	Apr 26
Morecambe	The Platform	May 4
Hull	Welly	May 17
New Brighton	Floral Pavilion	May 18

COLLATERAL

London	Camden Black Heart	Feb 7

CRASHDIET

London	Islington Academy	Apr 5

DISTURBED

London	Alexandra Palace	May 11
Glasgow	Academy	May 13
Manchester	Apollo	May 14

DROPKICK MURPHYS

Birmingham	Academy	Apr 21
Glasgow	Academy	Apr 21
Leeds	Academy	Apr 23
Manchester	Academy	Apr 21
London	Brixton Academy	Apr 26

DURHAM BLUES FESTIVAL
MUNGO JERRY, JOHN OTWAY & WILD WILLY BARRETT, MORE

Durham	Chiltern County Pub	Jun 15

BOB DYLAN, NEIL YOUNG

London	Hyde Park BST Festival	Jul 12

EAGLES

London	Wembley Stadium	Jun 23
Manchester	Arena	Jun 26
Birmingham	Arena	Jun 28
Liverpool	Echo Arena	Jun 30
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Jul 2
Glasgow	Hydro Arena	Jul 4

EDEN'S CURSE, MOB RULES, DEGREED

London	Camden Underworld	Apr 14
Newcastle	Trillians	Apr 15
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Apr 16
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Apr 17
Bilston	Robin 2	Apr 18
Sheffield	Corporation	Apr 19
Pontypridd	Muni Arts Centre	Apr 20
Glasgow	Garage	Apr 21

TOMMY EMMANUEL, JOHN KNOWLES

Perth	Concert Hall	Mar 7
Coventry	Warwick Arts Centre	Mar 9
Shrewsbury	Theatre Severn	Mar 10
Salisbury	City Hall	Mar 11
London	Royal Festival Hall	Mar 20
Sheffield	City Hall	Mar 21
Manchester	RNCM	Mar 22
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Mar 24

ENUFF Z'NUFF

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Feb 13
London	Camden Underworld	Feb 14
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Feb 15
Bradford	Trash	Feb 16
Buckley	Tivoli	Feb 17
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Feb 18

FAIRPORT CONVENTION

Peterborough	Key Theatre	Feb 5
Doncaster	Cast	Feb 6
Stockton-On-Tees	ARC	Feb 7
Gateshead	The Sage	Feb 8
Leeds	City Varieties	Feb 9
Loughborough	Town Hall	Feb 10
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Feb 12
Wavendon	The Stables	Feb 13
Basingstoke	The Anvil	Feb 14
Exeter	Corn Exchange	Feb 15
Bath	Forum	Feb 16
Bromsgrove	Artrix	Feb 17
Canterbury	Gulbenkian	Feb 19, 20
Worthing	Connaught Theatre	Feb 21
St Albans	Alban Arena	Feb 22
London	Highbury Union Chapel	Feb 23
Banbury	Trades & Labour Club	Feb 24

BRIAN FALLON (UNPLUGGED)

Newcastle	Wylam Brewery	Feb 5
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Feb 6
Manchester	Albert Hall	Feb 7
Cardiff	Tramshed	Feb 8
London	Highbury Union Chapel	Feb 9
Cambridge	Junction	Feb 22
Brighton	St George's Church	Feb 23
Bath	Komedia	Feb 24

FLEETWOOD MAC, PRETENDERS

Dublin	RDS Arena	Jun 13
London	Wembley Stadium	Jun 16, 18

FM

Preston	Guildhall	Feb 8
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Feb 16
Reading	Sub 89	Mar 1
Leamington Spa	The Assembly	Mar 2

LIVE!

FM, QUIREBOYS, VEGA, BAD TOUCH

Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 1
Cardiff	Tramshed	Apr 2
Wakefield	Warehouse 23	Apr 4
Sheffield	Corporation	Apr 6
Manchester	The Ritz	Apr 7
Glasgow	Garage	Apr 8
Wolverhampton	KK'S Steel Mill	Apr 9

FOCUS

Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Mar 21

STEVE FORBERT

Derby	Flowerpot	Feb 5
Gosforth	Civic Hall	Feb 7
Leeds	Thorner Victory Hall	Feb 8
Aberdour	Woodside Hotel	Feb 9

HENRIK FREISCHLADER

London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Mar 22
Wakefield	Warehouse 23	Mar 23
Scarborough	Blues Festival	Mar 24

FOUR STICKS WEEKENDER
GIRLSCHOOL, ZODIAC MINDWARP, MORE

ÐLondon	New Cross Amersham Arms	Sep 27-29

FUSION FESTIVAL
FOCUS, ENGLAND, IO EARTH, MORE

Stourport	Civic Centre	Mar 22-24

GODSMACK

London	Kentish Town Forum	Feb 27
Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 28
Birmingham	Institute	Mar 1

GONG

Brighton	Patterns	May 16
London	Hackney Oslo	May 17
Leeds	The Wardrobe	May 18
Newcastle	The Cluny	May 19
Glasgow	Audio	May 21
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	May 22
Cardiff	The Globe	May 23
Bristol	Thekla	May 24
Southampton	1865	May 25
Seaton	Mad Hatter's Festival	May 26

GOOD CHARLOTTE, SLEEPING WITH SIRENS, BOSTON MANOR

London	Alexandra Palace	Feb 20

GREAT BRITISH ALTERNATIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL
SKIDS, THE UNDERTONES, BIG COUNTRY, MORE

Minehead	Butlins	Mar 8-11

GRETA VAN FLEET

Newcastle	Academy	Mar 5
Glasgow	Academy	Mar 7
Leeds	Academy	Mar 8
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 10
Liverpool	Mountford Hall	Mar 11

GRIMM UP NORTH FESTIVAL
FIST, QUARTZ, CHROME MOLLY, MORE

Bury	Town Hall	Mar 8-10

HAKEN, VOLA, BENT KNEE

Manchester	Academy 3	Feb 15
Glasgow	St Luke's	Feb 16
Bristol	The Fleece	Feb 17
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Mar 16

HALESTORM, IN THIS MOMENT, NEW YEARS DAY

Glasgow	Hydro	Nov 24
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 25
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 27
London	Alexandra Palace	Nov 28

HARD ROCK HELL
DEE SNIDER, MICHAEL MONROE, DORO, BUCKCHERRY, MORE

Great Yarmouth	Vauxhall Holiday Resort	Nov 7-10

HARD ROCK HELL AOR
UFO, TYKETTO, MITCH MALLOY, TIGERTAILZ, MORE

Pwllheli	Hafan Y Mor Holiday Park	Mar 14-17

HARD ROCK HELL BLUES
SAVOY BROWN, AYNSLEY LISTER, CLIMAX BLUES BAND, MORE

Sheffield	Academy	Apr 13, 14

HARD ROCK HELL PROG
THE PINEAPPLE THIEF, GONG, CARAVAN, MORE

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 26, 27

HARD ROCK HELL PUNK
ANTI NOWHERE LEAGUE, CHELSEA, COCKNEY REJECTS, MORE

Sheffield	Academy	Oct 5, 6

CLASSIC ROCK RECOMMENDS

GRETA VAN FLEET

What's all the 'band of the moment' fuss about? Well, you know the best way to make up your own mind, don't you?

See below for dates. Currently March 5-11.

HARD ROCK HELL VIKINGS
FINNTROLL, HEIDEVOLK, MOONSORROW, MORE

Sheffield	Academy	Nov 30-Dec 1

ROY HARPER

Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Mar 12
Bexhill	De La Warr Pavilion	Mar 14
London	Palladium	Mar 16
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Mar 18
Gateshead	The Sage	Mar 20
Leeds	Town Hall	Mar 22
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Mar 24

HAWKWIND

London	Royal Albert Hall	Nov 26

HEAVY PETTIN'

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Mar 30
Newcastle	Trillians Bar	Mar 31

THE STEVE HILLAGE BAND

ÐCambridge	Junction	Jun 6
Manchester	The Ritz	Jun 7
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Jun 8

GLEN N HUGHES PERFORMS CLASSIC DEEP PURPLE
LAURENCE JONES

Holmfirth	Picturedome	May 14
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	May 15
Birmingham	Institute	May 17
Norwich	UEA	May 18
St Albans	Alban Arena	May 20
Salisbury	Alban Arena	May 21
Liverpool	Academy	May 23
Nottingham	Rock City	May 24

INGLORIOUS, CITY OF THIEVES

Glasgow	Garage	Feb 5
Newcastle	Boilershop	Feb 6
Manchester	Academy 2	Feb 7
Bingley	Arts Centre	Feb 8

JAWBREAKER

London	Brixton Academy	Apr 27
Gateshead	Sage 2	Sep 10

WILKO JOHNSON, GLENN TILBROOK

Buxton	Opera House	Feb 28
Warrington	Parr Hall	Mar 1
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Mar 2
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Mar 8
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Mar 9
St Albans	Alban Arena	Mar 10
Bilston	Robin 2	Mar 13
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Mar 14
Newcastle	Opera House	Mar 15
Stockton-on-Tees	Princess Alexandra Auditorium	Apr 11
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Apr 12
York	Fibbers	Mar 13
Cambridge	Junction	Apr 25
Cardiff	Tramshed	Apr 26
Cheltenham	Town Hall	Apr 27

JUMP

Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Mar 15
Maltby	Wesley Arts Centre	Mar 16
Southampton	1865	Mar 17
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Mar 22

KAYAK

London	Camden Underworld	Apr 5
Chepstow	Winter's End Festival	Apr 7

KING CRIMSON

London	Royal Albert Hall	Jun 18-20

KINGDOM OF MADNESS

Buckley	Tivoli	Mar 1
York	Fibbers	Mar 2
Manchester	Academy 3	Mar 3
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	Mar 7
London	Malet Street ULU	Mar 8
Poole	Winter's End Festival	Mar 9
Wavendon	The Stables	Mar 17
Pontypridd	The Muni	Mar 29
Alfreton	Rock & Bike Festival	Jul 13
Faversham	A New Day Festival	Aug 3

KING KING, SARI SCHORR

London	Camden Koko	Feb 7
Bournemouth	Old Fire Station	Feb 8
Brighton	Concorde 2	Feb 9
Norwich	Waterfront	Feb 10
Manchester	Academy 2	Feb 15
Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Feb 16
Glasgow	Academy	Feb 17

LENNY KRAVITZ

London	O2 Arena	Jun 11

LAIBACH

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Mar 1
Glasgow	SWG3	Mar 3

THE LEMON TWIGS

Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 21
Glasgow	Saint Luke's	Feb 22
Newcastle	Riverside	Feb 23
Leeds	Stylus	Feb 25
Birmingham	Institute 2	Feb 26
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Feb 27

LINCOLN BLUES FESTIVAL
STEVIE NIMMO TRIO, KEN PUSTELNIK'S GROUNDHOGS, MORE

Lincoln	Drill Hall	May 11

JOHN LODGE

Wavendon	The Stables	Apr 12
London	Cadogan Hall	Apr 13

LONDON PUNK FESTIVAL
ANTI NOWHERE LEAGUE, DISCHARGE, CHRON GEN, MORE

London	Gt Portland Street 229 Club	Sep 21

LYNYRD SKYNYRD, STATUS QUO

Glasgow	Hydro Arena	Jun 26
Manchester	Arena	Jun 27
London	Wembley Arena	Jun 29
Birmingham	Genting Arena	Jun 30

ERJA LYYTINEN

Brighton	Komedia	Mar 18
Bridport	Electric Palace	Mar 19
Wavendon	The Stables	Mar 20
Sheffield	The Greystones	Mar 21
Scarborough	Blues Festival	Mar 22
Glasgow	Nice 'N' Sleazy	Mar 23
Kinross	Green Hotel	Mar 24
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Mar 26
Oxford	The Bullingdon	Mar 27
Birmingham	Hare And Hounds	Mar 28
Southport	The Atkinson	Mar 29
Bromsgrove	The Artrix	Mar 30

MANIC STREET PREACHERS

Dublin	Olympia Theatre	May 12
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	May 14
Bath	Forum	May 15
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	May 17, 18
Manchester	The Ritz	May 20, 21
Birmingham	Academy	May 23
Southampton	Guildhall	May 24
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	May 26
York	Barbican	May 27
Liverpool	Olympia	May 30
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	May 31
Cardiff	Castle	Jun 29

MANOWAR

Birmingham	Academy	Apr 19, 20

BERNIE MARSDEN

London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Mar 1

MASSIVE WAGONS

Bristol	Thekla	Apr 6
Birmingham	Asylum	Apr 12
London	Tufnell Park Dome	Apr 13
Glasgow	Garage	Apr 19
Manchester	Academy 3	Apr 20

NICK MASON'S SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS

Aylesbury	Friars	Apr 30
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	May 1
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	May 3, 4

DAVE MATTHEWS BAND

London	Hammersmith Apollo	Mar 12, 13

METALLICA, GHOST, BOKASSA

Dublin	Slane Castle	Jun 8
Manchester	Etihad Stadium	Jun 18
London	Twickenham Stadium	Jun 20

MIDNIGHT OIL

Manchester	Apollo	Jun 9
London	Brixton Academy	Jun 13

MILLION DOLLAR RELOAD

Belfast	Empire	Feb 9

Recommended

MONSTER TRUCK

Bristol	Academy	Apr 18
Birmingham	Academy 2	Apr 19
Manchester	Academy 2	Apr 20
Glasgow	SWG3	Apr 22
Newcastle	Academy 2	Apr 23
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Apr 25
Norwich	Waterfront	Apr 26
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Apr 27

TO BE RETAINED ISSUED SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS ON BACK

THE NEAL MORSE BAND

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Mar 24

MOTT THE HOOPLE '74, TAX THE HEAT

Manchester	Academy	Apr 19
Glasgow	Barrowland	Apr 20
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Apr 21
Gateshead	The Sage	Apr 23
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 26, 27

BOB MOULD

London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Mar 14
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Mar 15
Edinburg	Liquid Rooms	Mar 16
Manchester	Academy 2	Mar 17

MUSE

London	London Stadium	Jun 1
Bristol	Ashton Gate	Jun 5
Manchester	Etihad Stadium	Jun 8

OZZY OSBOURNE, JUDAS PRIEST

Newcastle	Metro Radio Arena	Feb 5
Glasgow	The Hydro	Feb 7
Birmingham	Genting Arena	Feb 9
London	O2 Arena	Feb 11

OVERKILL, DESTRUCTION, FLOTSAM & JETSAM, MESHIAAK

London	Islington Academy	Mar 21

WILL IRELAND

Pwllheli	Hammerfest	Mar 22
Dublin	Academy	Mar 23
Glasgow	SWG3	Mar 24

PAPA ROACH, NOTHING MORE

Southampton	Guildhall	Apr 13
Exeter	Great Hall	Apr 14
Bristol	Academy	Apr 15
London	Kentish Town Forum	Apr 17
Manchester	Academy	Apr 20
Leeds	Academy	Apr 21
Newcastle	Academy	Apr 23
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Apr 24
Aberdeen	Music Hall	Apr 25
Norwich	UEA	Apr 27
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 28
Birmingham	Academy	Apr 29

THE PINEAPPLE THIEF, O.R.K.

Newcastle	Academy	Mar 20
Glasgow	St Luke's	Mar 21
Manchester	The Ritz	Mar 22
Birmingham	Institute 2	Mar 23
Bristol	The Fleece	Mar 25

P.O.D., ALIEN ANT FARM, '68

Exeter	Lemon Grove	Feb 26
Bristol	Academy	Feb 27
Norwich	Waterfront	Feb 28
Oxford	Academy	Mar 1
London	Kentish Town Forum	Mar 2
Newcastle	Academy	Mar 3
Glasgow	Garage	Mar 5
Hull	The Welly	Mar 6
Birmingham	Institute	Mar 7
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 9
Manchester	The Ritz	Mar 10
Limerick	Dolans	Mar 12
Belfast	Limelight	Mar 13
Dublin	Button Factory	Mar 14

BEN POOLE

Bilston	Robin 2	Feb 6
Derby	Flowerpot	Feb 7
Basildon	New Crawdaddy Blues Club	Feb 8
Oxford	Haven Club	Feb 13
Kendal	Bootleggers Bar	Feb 14
Cleethorpes	Moon On The Water	Feb 15
Doncaster	The Leopard	Feb 16

ANA POPOVIC

Cardiff	Globe	May 3
Chester	Live Rooms	May 4
Manchester	Deaf Institute	May 5
Newcastle	Cluny	May 7
Glasgow	Òran Mór	May 8
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	May 9
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	May 10
London	Manette Street Borderline	May 11

THE RAVEN AGE

Bristol	The Fleece	Mar 20
Manchester	Rebellion	Mar 21
Newcastle	Think Tank	Mar 23
Glasgow	Attic	Mar 24
Leeds	Key Club	Mar 26
Stoke-on-Trent	Sugarmill	Mar 27
London	Camden Underworld	Mar 28
Southampton	Joiners Arms	Mar 29

THE REVOLUTION

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Feb 13

RIVAL SONS

Birmingham	Academy	Feb 5
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Feb 6

RIVERSIDE

Bristol	SWX	Mar 21
Leeds	Stylus	Mar 22
Glasgow	SWG 3	Mar 23
Birmingham	The Mill	Mar 24

ROCKIN' THE BLUES
WALTER TROUT, JONNY LANG, KRIS BARRAS BAND

London	Kentish Town Forum	Jun 4

TODD RUNDGREN

London	Hammersmith Apollo	Apr 6

SAVOY BROWN

London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Apr 12
Bilston	Robin 2	Apr 15
Edinburgh	Blues Club	Apr 16

SARI SCHORR

Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Apr 2

JOHN SCOFIELD

London	Cadogan Hall	May 17

JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR

Liverpool	Academy	Mar 15
Birmingham	Institute	Mar 16
Manchester	The Ritz	Mar 17

JAKE OWENS

CLASSIC ROCK RECOMMENDS

HALESTORM

Heard them on record and like what you heard? Then you'll *really* like Lzzy and co. live. Grab a ticket before they're gone.

See opposite page for dates. Currently November 24-28.

Cardiff	Tramshed	Mar 19
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Mar 20
Portsmouth	Pyramids Centre	Mar 21
Cambridge	Junction	Mar 23
Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Mar 24
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Mar 26
Glasgow	SWG3	Mar 27

MIKE SHINODA

London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Mar 10

IAN SIEGAL

Gateshead	The Sage	Mar 20
Glasgow	Blue Arrow	Mar 21
Penrith	Playhouse Theatre	Mar 22
Farnsfield	Village Centre	Mar 23
Bristol	Jazz & Blues Festival	Mar 24
London	Brixton Blues Kitchen	Mar 26
Sheffield	The Greystones	Mar 27
Derby	Flowerpot	Mar 28
Worthing	Southern Pavilion	Mar 29

SLASH FEATURING MYLES KENNEDY & THE CONSPIRATORS,
PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS

Manchester	Apollo	Feb 16
Glasgow	SEC	Feb 17
Doncaster	The Dome	Feb 19
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Feb 20

SON OF MAN

Leicester	The Musician	Mar 1

SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY & THE ASBURY JUKES

Cardiff	Tramshed	Mar 17
Glasgow	St Luke's	Mar 19
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Mar 22
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Mar 23, 24

STEELHOUSE FESTIVAL
THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT, LIVING COLOUR, GUN, MORE

Ebbw Vale	Hafod-y-Dafal Farm	Jul 26-28

STEEL PANTHER

Dublin	Vicar Street	Feb 6
Belfast	Ulster Hall	Feb 7
Manchester	Academy	Feb 8
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Feb 10

STEELY DAN, STEVE WINWOOD

Glasgow	The Hydro	Feb 20
Manchester	Arena	Feb 21
Birmingham	Genting Arena	Feb 23
London	Wembley Arena	Feb 25
Dublin	3 Arena	Feb 28

STEREOPHONICS

Swansea	Singleton Park	Jul 13

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS,
EDDIE & THE HOT RODS

Leeds	Academy	Mar 6
Birmingham	Academy	Mar 8
Cardiff	Great Hall	Mar 9
Bristol	Academy	Mar 10
Norwich	Waterfront	Mar 12
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 13

Newcastle	Academy	Mar 15
Glasgow	Barrowland	Mar 16, 17
Inverness	Ironworks	Mar 19
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Mar 20
Manchester	Academy	Mar 22
Portsmouth	Pyramid Centre	Mar 23
London	Kentish Town Forum	Mar 24

STONE BROKEN, THOSE DAMN CROWS

Aberdeen	Unit 51	Feb 7
Edinburgh	La Belle Angelle	Feb 8
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 9
Belfast	Voodoo Lounge	Feb 10
Newcastle	Riverside	Feb 12
Stoke-on-Trent	Sugarmill	Feb 13
Birmingham	The Mill	Feb 15
Norwich	Epic Studios	Feb 16
Leeds	Brundell Social Club	Feb 17
Hull	Welly	Feb 19
Liverpool	Arts Club	Feb 20
London	Islington Academy	Feb 22
Oxford	Academy 2	Feb 23
Cardiff	Globe	Feb 24
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Feb 26
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Feb 27

THE STRANGLERS, DR FEELGOOD

Belfast	Ulster Hall	Feb 28
Dublin	Olympia	Mar 1
Scunthorpe	Baths Hall	Mar 5
Aberdeen	Beach Ballroom	Mar 7
Dunfermline	Alhambra	Mar 8
Glasgow	Academy	Mar 9
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 11
Reading	Hexagon	Mar 12
Newcastle	Academy	Mar 14
Leeds	Academy	Mar 15
Birmingham	Academy	Mar 16
Guildford	G Live	Mar 19
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Mar 21
London	Brixton Academy	Mar 22
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Mar 23
Bournemouth	Academy	Mar 25
Brighton	Dome	Mar 26
Bristol	Academy	Mar 28
Manchester	Apollo	Mar 30

THE STRUTS

Leeds	University Stylus	Feb 16
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 17
Newcastle	Northumbria University	Feb 18
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 19
Bristol	SWX	Feb 22
Manchester	Academy 2	Feb 23
Birmingham	Institute	Feb 24
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Feb 26

TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND

London	Palladium	Apr 26, 27

TERRORVISION

London	Islington Assembly Hall	May 2
Bristol	SWX	May 3
Nottingham	Rock City	May 4
Manchester	The Ritz	May 5

THUNDER, DAN REED

York	Barbican	Feb 5
Gateshead	Sage	Feb 6

Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Feb 8
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Feb 9
Bath	Forum	Feb 11
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Feb 12

MIKE TRAMP

Sutton-in-Ashfield	The Diamond	Apr 4
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Apr 5
Swansea	Hangar 18	Apr 6
Bournemouth	Zephyr	Apt 7
Norwich	Waterfront	Apr 9
London	Camden Black Heart	Apr 10
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Apr 11
Blackpool	The Waterloo	Apr 12
Sheffield	Corporation	Apr 13
Newcastle	Trillians	Apr 14
Bilston	Robin 2	Apr 16
Chester	Live Rooms	Apr 17
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Apr 18
Ballymena	Diamond Rock Club	Apr 20
Aberdeen	The Assembly	Apr 23
Dundee	Church	Apr 24
Glasgow	Audio	Apr 25
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Apr 16

THE TREATMENT, BIGFOOT

Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	May 22
Swansea	Hangar 18	May 23
London	Camden Underworld	May 24
Norwich	Waterfront	May 25
Cambridge	Portland Arms	May 27
Sheffield	Corporation	May 29
Manchester	Rebellion	May 30
Glasgow	Stereo	May 31
Carlisle	Brickyard	Jun 1
Newcastle	The Cluny	Jun 2

MARTIN TURNER EX-WISHBONE ASH

Darwen	Library Theatre	Mar 15
Hockley	Community Centre	Mar 22
Uckfield	Trading Boundaries	Mar 23
Hornchurch	Fairkytes Arts Centre	Mar 29
Sudbury	Quay Theatre	Mar 30
Hertford	Corn Exchange	Mar 31
Twickenham	Eel Pie Club	Apr 4
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	Apr 5
Worcester	Huntingdon Hall	Apr 6
Bridgend	Maesteg Town Hall	Apr 12
Pontypridd	Muni	Apr 13
Dartmouth	Flavel Arts Centre	Apr 14
Nantwich	Civic Hall	Apr 18
Hull	The Welly	Apr 19
Newcastle	The Cluny	Apr 20
Lowdham	Village Hall	Apr 26
Knaresborough	Frazer Theatre	Apr 27
Glasgow	The Ferry	May 2
Kinross	Green Hotel	May 3
Aberdeen	The Assembly	May 4
Havant	Spring Arts Centre	May 12

Recommended

UFO, TARA LYNCH

Oxford	Academy	Mar 9
Bournemouth	Academy	Mar 10
Cardiff	Tramshed	Mar 12
Birmingham	Town Hall	Mar 14
Pwllheli	Hard Rock Hell AOR Festival	Mar 15
Manchester	The Ritz	Mar 16
Leeds	Academy	Mar 17
Dublin	Academy	Mar 19
Belfast	Limelight	Mar 20
Cambridge	Junction	Mar 22
Northampton	Roadmender	Mar 23
Norwich	Waterfront	Mar 24
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 26
Newcastle	Academy	Mar 28
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Mar 29
Inverness	Ironworks	Mar 30
Glasgow	Academy	Mar 31
Hull	City Hall	Apr 2
Southampton	The Brook	Apr 3
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 4
London	Kentish Town Forum	Apr 5

TO BE RETAINED ISSUED SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS ON BACK

STAN WEBB'S CHICKEN SHACK

Sutton	Boom Boom Club	Feb 8
London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Apr 12

WEEZER

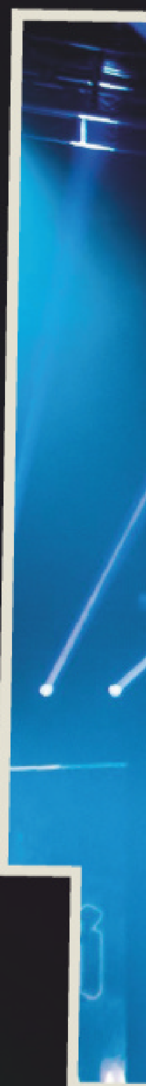
London	Brixton Academy	Jun 29

WHISKEY MYERS

London	Camden Electric Ballroom	May 21
Birmingham	Institute	May 22
Manchester	The Ritz	May 23
Glasgow	Garage	May 24
Dublin	Whelan's	May 26

ZZ TOP

London	Wembley Arena	Jul 12



‘Black Stone Cherry’s 19-song set is a lesson in durability.’

Black Stone Cherry / The Cadillac Three / Monster Truck

London Wembley Arena

Southern rock torch carriers triumph in no-frills triple-header.

★ The very first time Black Stone Cherry came to Europe, they spent the entire tour driving around in a tiny van that stank of stale piss. The financial constraints of being a baby band meant that travel budgets didn’t extend to transport with built-in toilets. Instead, these Kentucky gentlemen were forced to relieve themselves in whichever bottles were at hand, and hope that no one kicked out their legs too carelessly in the night.

“Of course, one of those bottles got knocked over,” recalls BSC drummer John Fred Young, a man who could talk the hind legs off a donkey and have it worrying about its front pair too, as we sit in a chilly dressing room deep inside Wembley Arena. “The whole thing just smelt of pee. That was all we could smell for that tour.”

The days of urine-soaked transport are long gone if the flash tour buses parked in Wembley’s loading bay are anything to go by. Their very first gig in London was supporting long-forgotten cock-rock revivalists Hinder in front of a couple of hundred people in a student union. Tonight they return to this vast barn a decade after playing here as openers on a Def Leppard/Whitesnake package tour, and two years after they headlined the venue themselves for the first time.

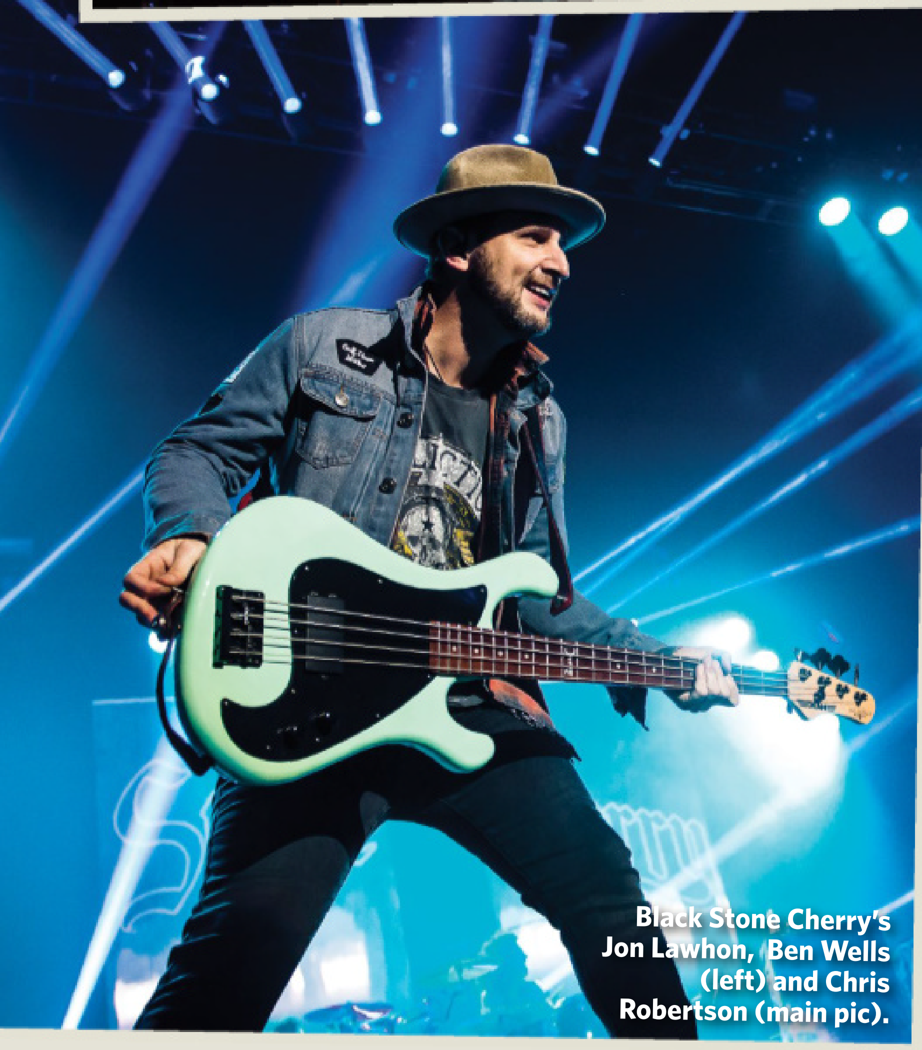
“We just built it and built it,” says John Fred. “It’s nothing more complicated than getting out and playing, month after month, year after year.”

Tonight’s show isn’t fully sold out, but it suggests there’s still a sizable appetite for a no-frills triple-header like this, and Monster Truck are the perfect openers. The Canadian band’s thudding boogie-metal might put the ‘potatoes’ in ‘meat and potatoes’, but the relentless energy of *Don’t Tell Me How To Live* and *The Lion* takes the edge off a cold pre-Christmas evening. And if the warm reception from the audience is anything to go by, spuds never go out of fashion.

Nashville’s The Cadillac Three are at least somewhere north of ‘ditch-digger’s arse’ in terms of glamour, albeit only just. Jerry-rigging hard rock and

Monster Tuck: delivering thudding boogie-metal.

The Cadillac Three: successfully nailing together hard rock and country music.



Black Stone Cherry's Jon Lawhon, Ben Wells (left) and Chris Robertson (main pic).

country music together isn't a new idea, but few right now are nailing it quite so authentically as these self-proclaimed "bad boys from Tennessee" – if it's a song about booze, the south or boozing in the south you're after, they're yer fellas. Visually it needs help: drummer Neil Mason and lap-steel player Kelby Ray are rooted to their instruments, leaving singer/guitarist Jaren Johnston looking adrift in the middle of the vast stage. Still, his unashamed guitar-hero ker-twangin' goes some way to filling a hole, and you'll be hard pushed to find a better song about falling in love while boozing in the south than *White Lightning*.

Black Stone Cherry's climb from pissy transit vans to this elevated vantage point has been slow but steady. They've encountered the odd bump – notably "getting fired" from long-time home Roadrunner Records a few years ago. "They wanted us to sound like every other radio band in America," says John Fred, sitting in the band's dressing room an hour before they show. "We were, like, 'We could never sound like that. We're a mule in a horse race.'"

Edmonton's finest certainly haven't been fast-tracked to success like certain other recent rock'n'roll overnight sensations. "I think personally my credo is always to be genuine," says the drummer, choosing his words carefully. "In this industry, you have to be sure that what you're putting out is something that you fully believe in, and isn't contrived. You can cook butter in a skillet for a minute, but it's gonna dry up."

Is he saying that some of these newer bands are contrived? Like, say, Greta Van Fleet? "We were taking bets on when somebody was gonna ask us about them," he says with a laugh. "Look, the talent is there. It's massive. But nobody's ever gonna be Led Zeppelin. You have to have your own sound." He pauses. "I'm trying to be as gentlemanly here as I can. We have fought tooth and claw to get where we are, we've kicked down doors, been screamed at by everybody in the music industry, and we're still here. We're a coyote and we will not die."

Whatever the relative merits of the bands who have come after them, Black Stone Cherry have proved that talk about rock's demise is both premature and glib. Tonight's 19-song set spans their five studio albums, from *Rain Wizard* (the opening track of their 2006 debut, dispatched three numbers in) to five songs from this year's *Family Tree*, and is a lesson in durability.

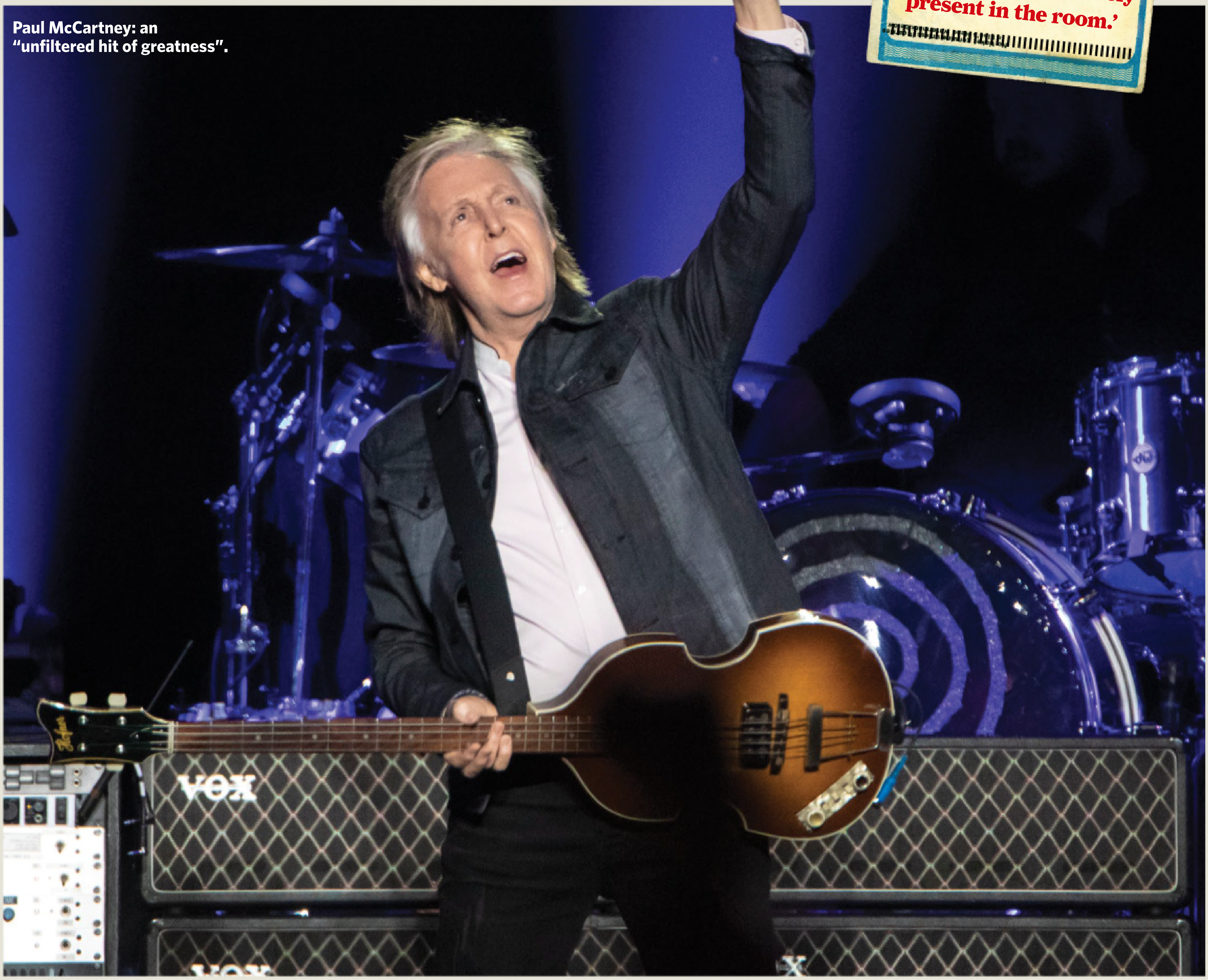
There's nothing fancy about a Black Stone Cherry show, from frontman Chris Robertson's trucker cap down. But then they wear that lack of fanciness like a badge of honour in 2019 – as John Fred put it pre-show, their MO is simply to be "the baddest-ass southern rock'n'roll band".

John Fred is BSC's not-so-secret weapon. He's the livewire at the back, a Duracell Bunny with a Kentucky twang who plays an extended drum solo one-handed so he can blast away at a harmonica at the same time. But it's Roberston who is truly their Most Valuable Player. The unassuming frontman might look like he's just stepped out from behind the counter of a interstate truck-stop diner, but he's got guts, heart and, in his asphalt rasp, soul.

'BSC have the 'baddest-ass southern rock'n'roll band' thing pretty much sewn up.'

An intro film that places BSC in the same exalted company as Lynyrd Skynyrd, Boston and Aerosmith might be overstating their case a little, and John Fred's insistence that they've been inspired by recent shows with Gov't Mule to veer off into jam-band territory doesn't really materialise beyond an extended cover of Willie Dixon's *Hoochie Coochie Man* and the odd snippet of Hendrix's *Purple Haze* and Skynyrd's *Simple Man* dropped in strategically throughout. But that's not really what Black Stone Cherry are here for. As far as the whole thing goes, tonight proves they've got it pretty much sewn up.

Words: **Dave Everley** Photos: **Will Ireland**



Paul McCartney: an "unfiltered hit of greatness".

'The last of The Beatles' magic dust is absolutely present in the room.'

Paul McCartney

Liverpool Echo Arena

Macca brings it back home beautifully with a set-list to die for.

★ Paul McCartney is playing solo acoustic guitar by the banks of the Mersey. He's halfway through a three-hour show which finds room for every facet of his music, from the hardest rock to Christmas pap. And now he's singing The Beatles' *Blackbird* alone. He's introduced it in the evocative context of 1968's Southern racist brutality, and his hope then that the song might comfort those suffering, "if it ever got back to them" – as if the White album was a message in a bottle. Whatever metaphors it was meant to carry, *Blackbird* is a perfect beauty, distilling McCartney's emotional melodic genius. He follows it with 1982's *Here Today*, and all the things he ached to say to lost Lennon. Lyrics open his heart with haiku profundity as he sings: *'I am holding back the tears no more.'*

Me neither. I'm being overwhelmed, in a way I last experienced when a vocally rejuvenated Bob Dylan stood alone near the lip of the Royal Albert Hall stage in 2013, pinning the audience back in their seats with a prophet's fervour, just the way the old legends claimed. Now, as then, this is the real thing: McCartney channelling the deepest feelings simply, the Beatle with the last of his former band's magic dust absolutely present in the room, burningly alive. It's an unfiltered hit of greatness, a lifetime memory.

What McCartney has dubbed the Freshen Up tour, indicating a reworked set-list with a good new album, *Egypt Station*, to draw from, is elsewhere full of fruitfully unexpected turns, judiciously setting failsafe Fabs hits alongside less obvious corners of a ridiculously diverse – and sometimes just ridiculous – songbook.

His pre-Beatles band The Quarrymen's *In Spite Of All The Danger*, written in 1957, gets an Elvis vocal hitch and a high, exciting twang of McCartney acoustic guitar. He plays it as if he remained that 50s kind of musician, The Quarrymen, not The Beatles, carrying him here. Being in Liverpool brings other memories, told casually to an audience including family, friends, Elvis Costello and old, fervent Liverpool faces who followed this thing from the start and understand it in their bones.

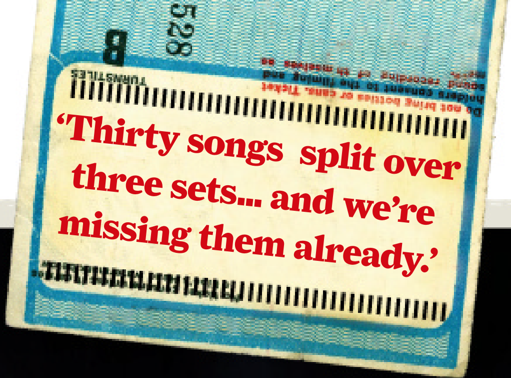
McCartney starts *Something* on ukulele, building it into a grand tribute to its writer George Harrison and boyhood Beatle bonds. All that band's songs have been annexed by the last genius standing. But Lennon is heard most artfully in a Wings pastiche of him, *Let Me Roll It*, its hard shards of fuzz guitar biting into McCartney's vocal as if Plastic Ono Band John is by his side. Elsewhere, this is absolutely a rock show, and very live, from a hard, sharp *Back In the USSR* to the guitars' wrecking-ball swing on a Manson-exorcising *Helter Skelter*.

The surprises are mostly jettisoned on a home straight of maximum volume. But before *Hey Jude* is turned over to the community, McCartney sings it carefully. *Let It Be*'s heavenly tribute to his mother Mary also sees him at the piano as if on an island of personally committed performance, as its giant chords crash around him. *Live And Let Die* comes complete with flamethrowers and explosions. But more memorable is the McCartney who stands at its end stabbing the piano like Jerry Lee Lewis, then sags in mock-exhaustion amid the cordite carnage, like Goon Spike Milligan.

One of the miracles of The Beatles' eight years was that McCartney emerged sane and intact, from bends of fame that his early life in the National Trust-owned council house near here couldn't ready him for. And now he's 76, magnificently mining the diamond-hard core of a flawed but prodigious, continuing career.

Nick Hasted

MIKE GRAY/AVALON-PHOTOSHOT



The Pretty Things

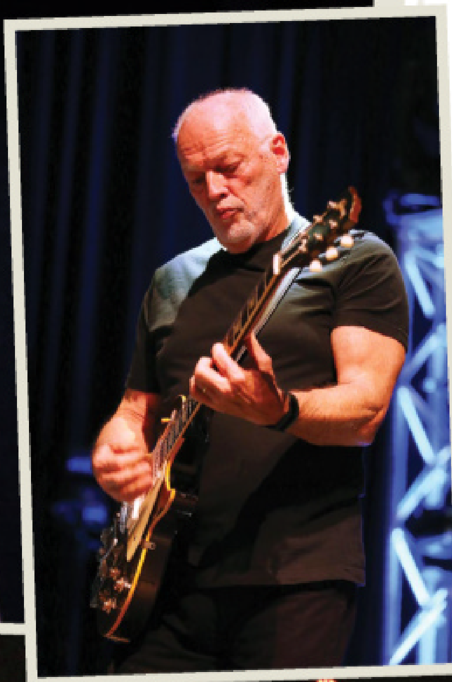
London Indigo

Last stand for eternal Thames Delta blues bridesmaids

★ When it comes to pivotal decisions, Dick Taylor walking out on Jagger, Richards, Brian Jones and Ian Stewart in 1962 because he didn't want to play bass was a doozie. It's a decision that gets the "and he never regretted it for a moment" treatment from the stage tonight, but you know he did. Of course he did. Who wouldn't? Tonight is the final electric show by The Pretty Things (the band Taylor formed with vocalist Phil May in '63). And while the intervening years have been marked by an ever-widening chasm between the two bands' fortunes, tonight leaves no doubt that Taylor made the right choice.

Artistically speaking, the ever-sharp guitarist bought his freedom to stay true to his blues roots and to blossom creatively in a way that Jones and Bill Wyman never could. And tonight's a celebration of that fact. Thirty songs are split over three sets (the first with today's impeccable Things blasting out classics from *Honey, I Need* to *Mr Evasion*), the second sees *SF Sorrow* alumni Skip Allen, Wally Waller and John Povey deliver selections from 1968's conceptual psych classic with David Gilmour. A blues-heavy third segment has Van Morrison unleashing a searing *Baby, Please Don't Go*, and as a valedictory encore becomes increasingly inevitable, we're missing The Pretty Things already.

Ian Fortnam



Pretty impressive: Phil May, David Gilmour (top) and Dick Taylor.

Clutch

London Brixton Academy

Roaringly good times with the band who gave us *Classic Rock*'s No.1 album of 2018.

★ In hard rock circles, where colossal riffs and magnificent beards are sought-after items, there ain't no party like a Clutch party. It's Friday, and the whole world (well, the London rock community) seems to have put on its Christmas out-of-office, had a few beers and headed to Brixton for this holiday season kick-start.

Maryland's pint-sized mixologists of rock, blues and funk might look more like roadies than rock stars, but they draw a generous audience, including fans who've followed them since the early 90s as well as recent converts. Mindful of such a returning clientele, Clutch like to keep things fresh. Every night brings a new set chosen by a different member of the band (tonight's was picked by bassist Dan Maines, we later find out). Plus they have a killer, swarthy-yet-sharp new album, *Book Of Bad Decisions*, so a good portion of the evening is devoted to the likes of *H.B Is In Control* and *In Walks Barbarella* – part of a set-list that leans more towards their latter-day work, characterised by chunky grooves and less of their weirder stoner punk roots. Some lifelong fans may lament this, but it's bloody hard to argue with the feelgood sizzle of *X-Ray Visions* and *Earth Rocker*. And with a frontman like Neil Fallon – a howling embodiment of early blues, science-fiction and whip-smart comedic influences – seldom has a band looked so ordinary *and* been this watchable.

Polly Glass

Uriah Heep / Gun

London O2 Shepherds Bush Empire

Two bands who still fire the imagination.

★ While they may be a long way removed from the chart success of their early days of the late 80s/early 90s, tonight's openers Gun are probably better now than they've ever been. There's a genuine swagger on stage, and the band's energy clearly gets the audience going.

In some ways tonight's performance from Uriah Heep is an odd one. With the exception of *Too Scared To Run*, all the material either comes from their 2018 album *Living The Dream* or harks back to the glory days of the 70s, meaning a whole swathe of their career is overlooked. All of which could easily have made the set rather unwieldy, but there's a warmth here that shines through.

Opening with new song *Grazed By Heaven*, the band settle quickly into their stride, with charismatic vocalist Bernie Shaw and effervescent guitarist Mick Box proving as irresistible as always.

Of course, it's the classic songs which really create the dynamic atmosphere. *Gypsy* gives the musicians a chance to stretch out, and *July Morning* is a tour de force. But it's when former drummer Lee Kerslake, now suffering from terminal cancer, joins the throng to provide extra vocals for *Lady In Black* that the night reaches an emotional crescendo. You can feel the love for this man.

Heep could easily coast along on their reputation, but thankfully they remain a vital live force.

Malcolm Dome

Thunder

London The Roundhouse

Two sets, cool covers and inflatable Santas with Bowes, Morley and co.

★ This sold-out Christmas celebration sees Thunder (the leaping around edition) supported by Thunder (the sat-down variety), with the two very different sets separated by what singer Danny Bowes calls "a quick break for an old man's wee wee".

Previewing this month's tour for *Please Remain Seated*, an album of assorted low-key reworkings, the band expand their line-up to include two female backing singers and an additional keyboard player. What comes next refuses to follow the path of a typical Thunder show, with many of their best-known songs being jettisoned. Instead, over almost two and a half hours they perform a whopping 25 songs, many of which are covers. Of these, the Small Faces' *Lazy Sunday* fits Bowes's wide-boy persona like a glove, while The Who's *Behind Blue Eyes*, Golden Earring's *Radar Love*, Fleetwood Mac's *The Chain* and Free's *My Brother Jake* are equally well-suited to a group presentation.

An encore sees Scott Gorham join in with Thin Lizzy's *Jailbreak*, followed by guitarist Andy Taylor (The Power Station, Duran Duran) on the Faces classic *Stay With Me*, while a rousing finale of *Merry Xmas Everybody* unites the entire entourage, complete with snow machine and an array of wobbling, giant inflatable Santas, elves and reindeer, melting even the most Scrooge-like of hearts.

Dave Ling

JUDY TOTTON

STEVE HACKETT

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Fri 08 Leicester De Montfort Hall
Sat 09 Cardiff St David's Hall
Mon 11 Liverpool Philharmonic
Tue 12 Brighton Dome
Wed 13 Portsmouth Guildhall
Fri 15 Salisbury City Hall
Sat 16 Reading Hexagon
Mon 18 Birmingham Symphony Hall
Tue 19 York Barbican
Wed 20 Bath Forum
Fri 22 Halifax Victoria Theatre
Sat 23 Gateshead The Sage
Mon 25 Edinburgh Usher Hall
Tue 26 Manchester Bridgewater Hall
Wed 27 Southend Cliffs Pavilion
Fri 29 London Hammersmith Eventim Apollo

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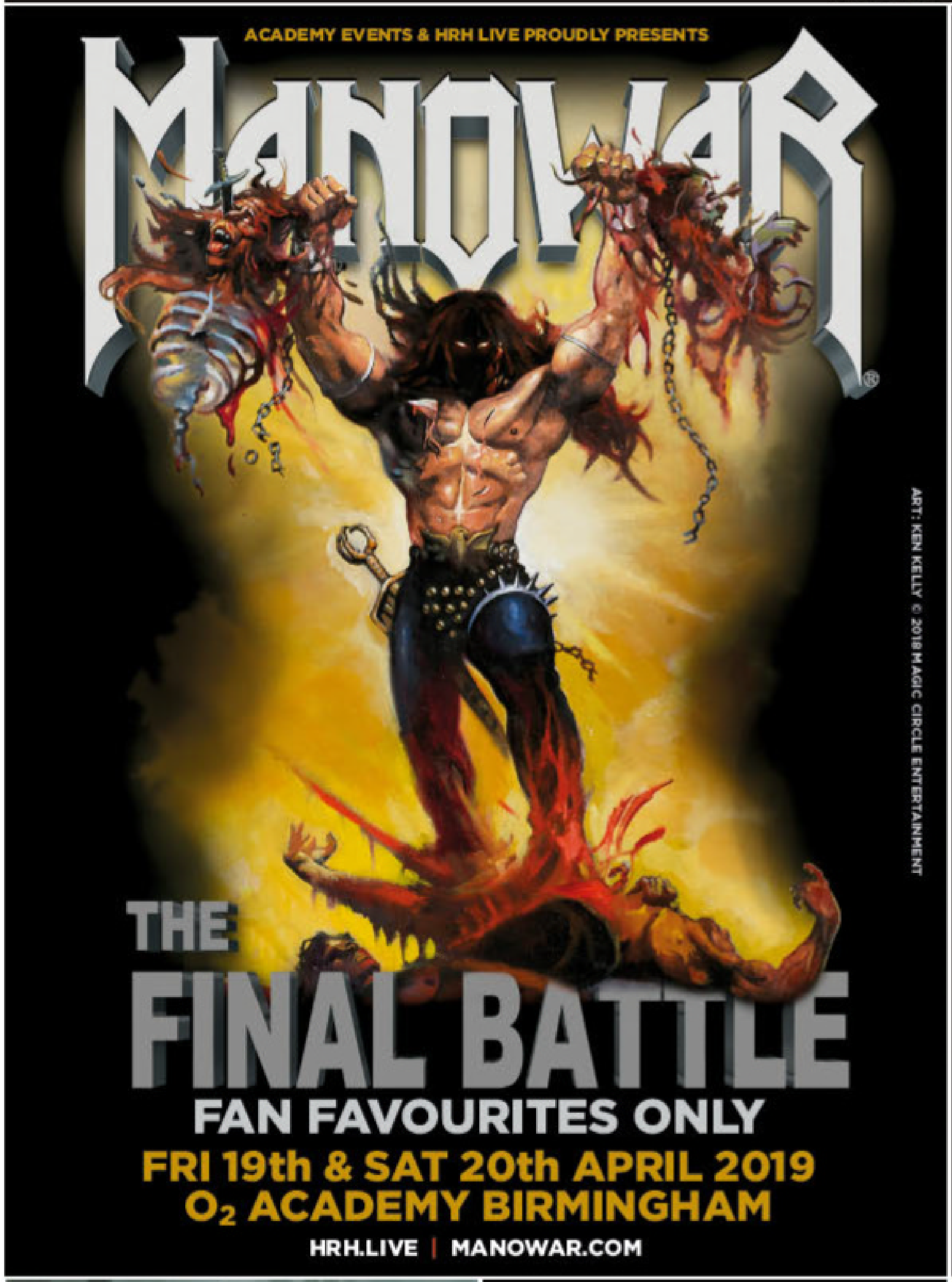

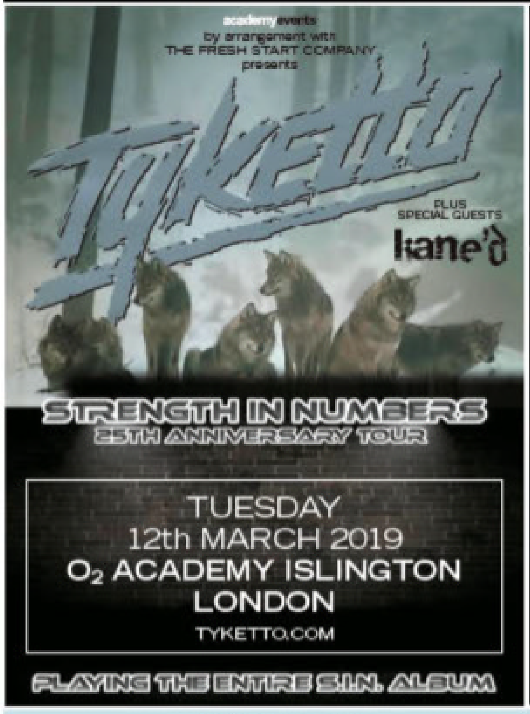

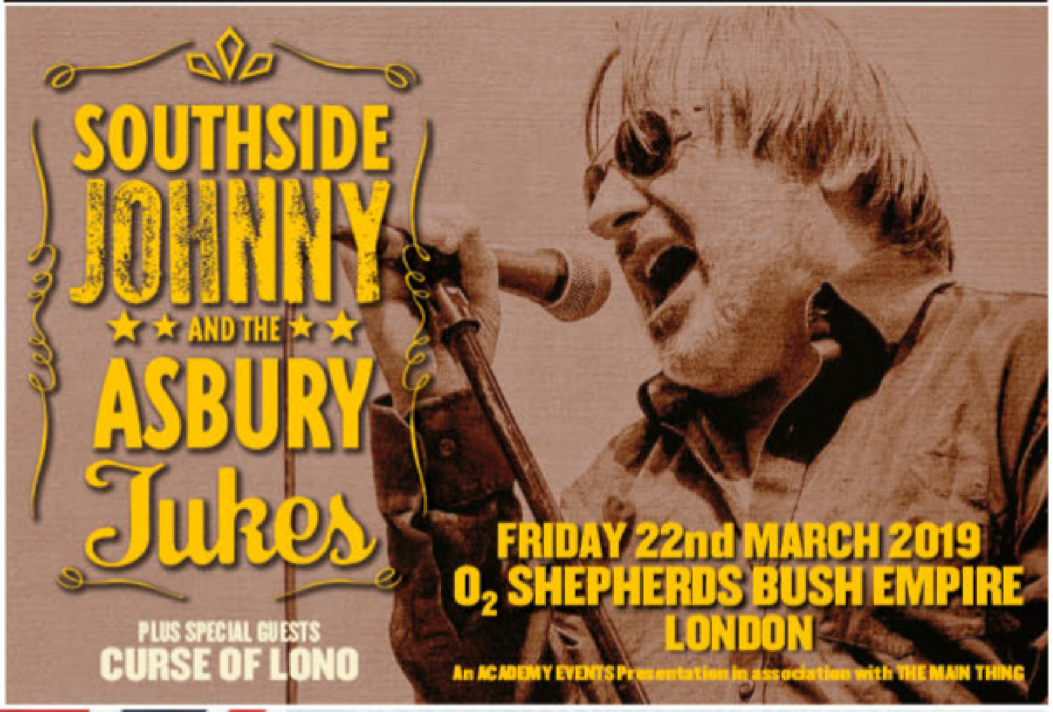

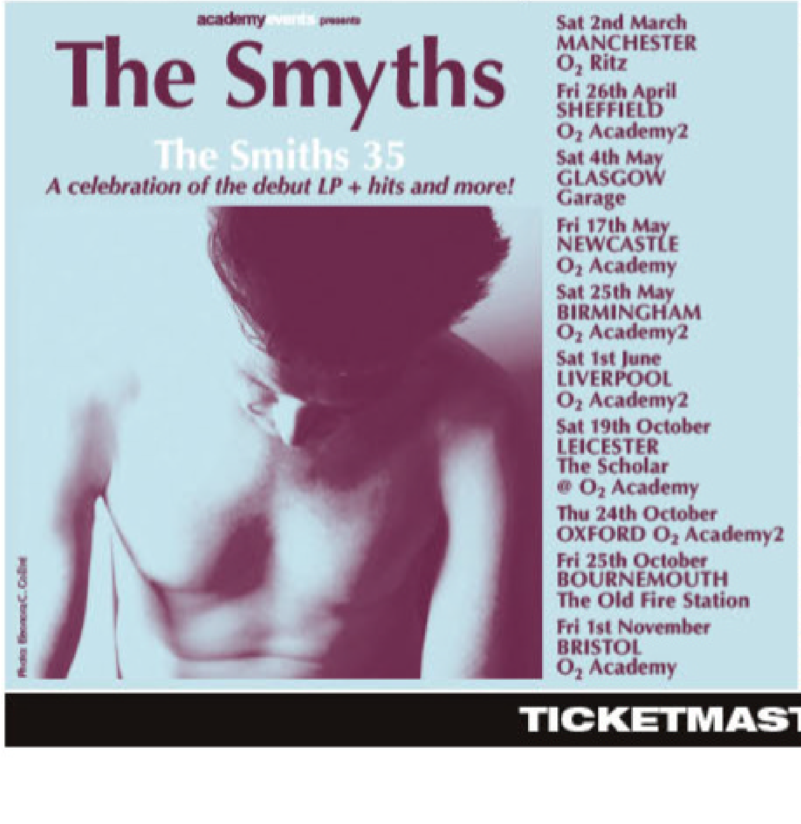

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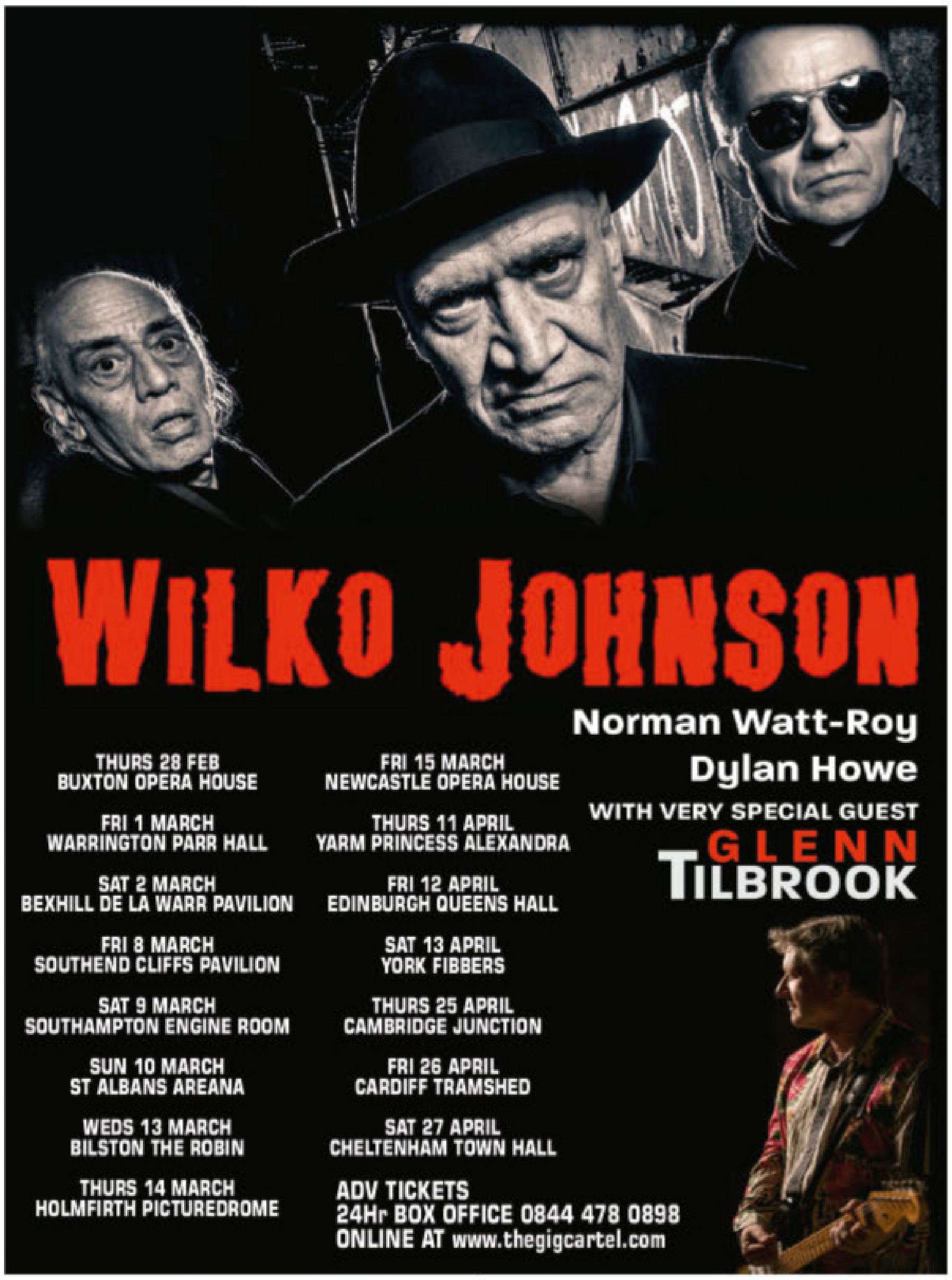
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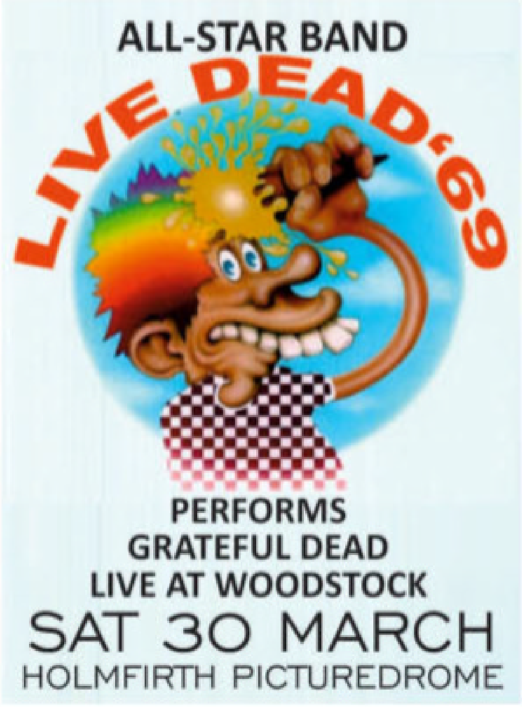
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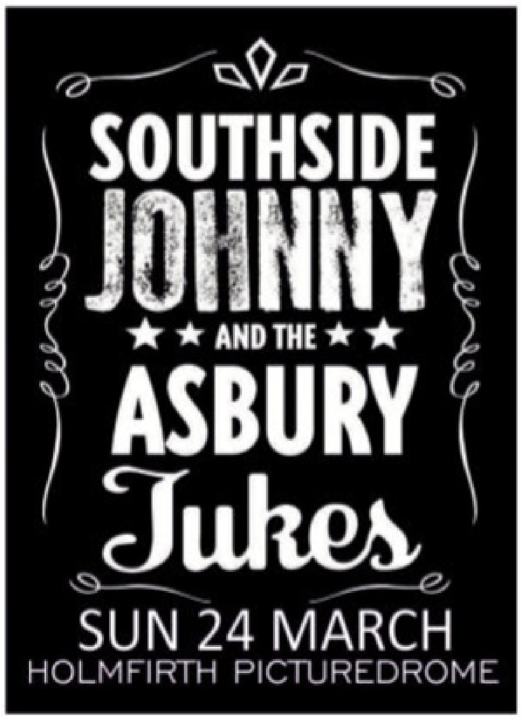
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SAT 13 APR SHEFFIELD HRH BLUES
FRI 26 APR BLACKPOOL THE WATERLOO MUSIC BAR
SAT 27 APR HUDDERSFIELD MARSH BLUES CLUB
THU 09 MAY CHISLEHURST BEAVERWOOD CLUB
FRI 10 MAY SUTTON BOOM BOOM CLUB
THU 16 MAY BILSTON ROBIN 2
FRI 07 JUN WAKEFIELD WAREHOUSE 23
FRI 21 JUN PERSHORE THE IRON ROAD LIVE
FRI 12 JUL BRADFORD FESTIVAL
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The Soundtrack Of My Life

The Pub Landlord and drummer with Fat Cops **AL MURRAY** on the records, artists and gigs that are of lasting significance to him.

Interview: **Paul Elliott**

Keith Moon was a drummer and a bit of a joker. Al Murray is the reverse. The Buckinghamshire-born comedian, famous for his plain-speaking, Queen-loving character the Pub Landlord also plays drums in the band Fat Cops, whose self-titled debut album is out this month. "This is not a Pub Landlord project," Murray says. "If it was, it would just be an album of Queen covers done with him warbling horribly." Instead, Fat Cops play what Murray describes as "straight-up indie rock". But he is a major prog fan; his drumming hero is Phil Collins. And when he talks about the music he loves, the word 'Queen' keeps coming up.

THE FIRST MUSIC I REMEMBER HEARING

As a kid I learned to sing *Yellow Submarine* without knowing who The Beatles were. The song was in the ether. It's the same thing with Queen, you know their music, whether you like it or not.

THE FIRST SONG I PERFORMED LIVE

When I was at college I was the drummer in a cover band called the Blue Picnic. I don't know why. *Echo Beach* [by Martha And The Muffins] was the highlight of our set. The Blue Picnic was two goths with lavish hair, and two dweebs. I counted myself among the latter.

THE GREATEST ALBUM OF ALL TIME

The Beatles' White album. It's a brilliant record, and the best song on it is *Happiness Is A Warm Gun*. I love Lennon's sarcastic, throwaway tone.

THE SINGER

I went to see the Queen movie, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and it really underlined what an extraordinary man Freddie Mercury was. An amazing talent.

THE GUITAR HERO

I really liked Poison Ivy in The Cramps. Guitar playing can be very blokey, but obviously not with her. She had this enormous guitar sound that left no room for noodling. There were no blazing virtuosos in The Cramps.

THE SONGWRITER

I'll pick Norman Blake from Teenage Fanclub, and not just because he sang backing vocals on the *Fat Cops* album. In a cynical age, his songs are sincere and really affecting.

THE ANTHEM

Somebody To Love by Queen. It's them doing soul music, which ought not to work, but it's so heartfelt. It's probably about Freddie being gay.

THE BEST LIVE BAND I'VE SEEN

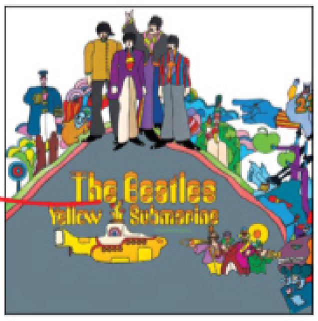
The current incarnation of King Crimson, with three drummers, is fucking amazing. I saw them in Pompeii at the amphitheatre where Pink Floyd did their movie.

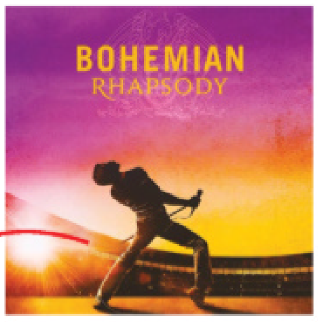
MY BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

As a Genesis fan, *Invisible Touch* was the record that tested me greatly. It was the Genesis conundrum: "Oh shit, they're a pop band all of a sudden!" I was into *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. Now, I understand why *Invisible Touch* is a good pop record.

THE BEST RECORD I'VE MADE

I'm rather proud of the *Fat Cops* album. It's indie rock, but not that kind of twee indie bollocks.





THE WORST RECORD I'VE MADE

I did a football song called *It Was Our Idea*, for the 2010 World Cup. I thought it was a catchy song, and it had a positive message. Sadly no record company would touch it with a bargepole.

THE MOST UNDERRATED BAND OF ALL TIME

Fantomas, an avant-garde metal supergroup, with Mike Patton from Faith No More singing and Dave Lombardo from Slayer on drums. Their album of movie soundtrack covers, *The Director's Cut*, is a mad, weird cult record.

THE BEST LIVE ALBUM

It took me a long time to get into The Band. I was always sceptical of something you were supposed to like if you had taste. But then I heard The Band on *The Last Waltz*. It was beautifully done.

MY GUILTY PLEASURE

I'm a big Neil Diamond fan. I did him on *Stars In Their Eyes* – and not very well. He's a brilliant songwriter and a proper star.

MY SATURDAY NIGHT PARTY SONG

Rock Lobster by the B-52's is essential party music. I host these sprawling all-day parties where I barbecue, whatever the weather. And I try to make sure I'm pre-loaded. There's champagne for everyone when they arrive because I've already started on it.

MY 'IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE' SONG

You need something slick and smooth to get that mood going. I go for Rickie Lee Jones's *Chuck E.'s In Love*.

MY CULT HERO

Alex Chilton from Big Star had so much style and wrote really harmonic songs, but it was always a refined taste. Some bands are meant to be enormous, like Queen, but with Big Star there's that romantic thing about the fact that they are not well known.

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME CRY

The Raven That Refused To Sing by Steven Wilson. It's so melancholic, and it's like Steven has exactly calculated the button he needs to push in me to make me blub.

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

We Have All The Time In The World by Louis Armstrong, for that sense that even in the darkest times all that matters is love. That's beautiful.

Fat Cops is out on March 1 via Universal/Sony DADC. Al Murray's Landlord Of Hope And Glory UK tour runs from May to July.

"As a Genesis fan, *Invisible Touch* was the record that tested me greatly."

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